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The Smart set

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Vol. XLVIII JANUARY, 1916 No. 1

THE SMART SET

The Vintage Magazine

THE TENDER OF CABBAGES

(SALONA, A. D. 310)

By John McClure

I WAS a king once. I lived in a palace governing great states. And troops with my pennons went marching up and down the world. They carried my eagles swaying in the wind to the far corners of the continents, playing martially upon trumpets, with great rolling of drums. I know what it is, this being a king. I have tried it.

In the arenas of great Rome ten thousand men shed one another's blood for my pleasuring. They brought bears from Russia, tigers from India, that I might behold them fight. Five hundred maidens have danced before me with great glittering of feet. With a word I could bring death into the homes of barons, disaster upon cities. My troops went marching up and down the world. I know what it is.

But there is not much in it. I tossed it away.

Though I trampled forty worlds, what would it profit me? There is no peace in great place—none. See, my hair is grayer than goose-down. Maps are no more wrinkled with rivers than my forehead with seams of care. There is not much in it. I tossed it away.

Now I tend cabbages. There is no man in the empire with cabbages the like of these. I have manured them carefully. My crop this season is large.

At evening I watch the sun set yonder across the sea. I am up before sunrise. I think I am the contentedest man in the empire. Yes, I have manured them carefully. I sell some of them at the market, but not all. They are good food for my rabbits.

At evening I watch the sun set across the sea, I standing among my cabbages. It is a beautiful picture surely. I think I am the contentedest man in the empire. But he who sits now in the palace at Rome—his hair grows grayer than goose-down and his face is fast becoming wrinkled like a map.

TWO ANNIVERSARIES

By H. S. Haskins

SHE was crying softly to herself when Jackson entered the living room of their modest apartment.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, vainly striving to soften his big voice, "What's the matter, little woman?"

He tried to draw his wife's hands from her face, but she shook herself free, sank deeper into the sofa cushions and sobbed.

They had been married five years. During that time John had learned the futility of questioning his wife during similar outbursts of weeping.

Finally the sobs became less frequent. Mary's grief-shaken form relaxed and from his broad shoulder, where she had reluctantly accepted comfort, a doleful voice accused: "John . . . you . . . forgot that yesterday was . . . the anniversary of our wedding."

* * *

Five years later Mrs. Franklin Brainerd sat in her smart drawing-room. Time had dealt kindly with her. The glow from an open fire intensified the roses in her cheeks. Her gray hair gave her skin the soft tone of a blonde which blended charmingly with the underlying pallor of a brunette.

The draperies at one end of the room parted. A young girl entered.

"Am I intruding?"

"No, dearest, you never intrude." Mrs. Brainerd smiled up into the lovely young face of her stepdaughter. Then —"Isn't it strange, I feel as if I had forgotten something," she murmured.

"You asked me to remind you to get a list of patronesses of the Midwinter Cotillions from Mrs. Grayson," said Gladys Brainerd.

"That must be it," purred Mary Brainerd, formerly Jackson.

Far away, John Jackson slept with the permanency which it is beyond human power to correct.

Another anniversary had been forgotten.

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THE EXCURSION BOAT

By B. P. Clark, Jr.

THERE is a squarish, white boat
Staggering down the coast
Before the wind.
It looks as though it had been on a picnic,
And had eaten too much pie.

THE MISSPENT YOUTH OF MAX TRELAWNEY

By Frank R. Adams

"THE years that we have known each other, my dear Max, are becoming too many for me to care to count, and still we are merely friends."

Rose smiled at him across his own luncheon table with the broad, full-lipped smile that was indicative of the generous nature of her. That with the name of O'Callan was all she had ever received as inheritance from her father.

"I'm thinking it is obvious to everyone in the world, even to me," she went on frankly, "that you do not wish to marry me, even if you do care more for me than anyone else you know."

"Why, my dear Rose," he interrupted hastily and gallantly, "I never—"

She held up her hand to silence his perfunctory courtesy.

"The reason I spoke of it at all, is because here are you and I letting our youth slip through our fingers like so much water and I doubt if we're getting one-tenth the value for it that the gods intended. You don't realize that you are getting older. Those books that you live among never tell you any truths about yourself. They're too absorbed with their own selfish gossip about people who have been dead a thousand years. But you're thirty-eight, Max, and I'm somewhat younger—I won't say how much but you can take off as many years as your credulity will allow—and we've been content with husks and chaff when the grain was ours by divine right. I am a good-looking woman yet, but it is only by some special dispensation that will be withdrawn soon if I do not make use of it. I have never cared for anyone but you and it seems unfair that you should not possess what is and always has been yours in spirit. I have never been able to make you any fitting return for the many benefits you have showered upon me, so now I pray that you will accept the gift I have to offer, myself, given freely and with no conditions attached."

Max looked at her earnest face with friendly, understanding eyes. "Rose dear," he said, " you're the sweetest woman the Lord ever created and it's a mystery to me why I've never fallen madly in love with you. You knew I wouldn't misunderstand your generosity just as I knew you would never misunderstand the services I have tried to perform for you. You don't know how you tempt me. The sweet eyes of you are enough to make St. Anthony change his name to John Smith and your tender mouth that should be singing your babes to sleep can voice the deepest blasphemies and make them sound like choir practice by the angels."

"I'd be very good to you," she interjected wistfully.

"You would, but I'm an idealist. We must go on as we are."

"We can't," she said simply.

"Can't?"

"No, Max, I don't think I want to. It's too difficult. I've tried to be like you, always to sit on the fringe of things as if I were old and lived only in memories. I can't someway do it. Later, when I've something to remember, I'll sit as idly by as anyone."

Rose O'Callan left her chair and stood before him, the long full lines of her from shoulder to ankle a delight and a satisfaction to the eye.

"I've no right to spoil your chances for the last few years of your youth and you've no right to spoil mine. If you don't see me you may find someone else and I—please God, I'll see what lies for me out of this path that runs parallel to yours but never meets it."

His eyes probed hers for signs of relenting. "Why need you punish me for my virtues?" he asked with a sigh. "Here I've treated you for years with all the respect I might show to a sister merely to be sure to retain your friendship and now that very repression becomes the reason why I must forfeit your pleasant society. Do you think my aloof attitude has been attained without any effort? Do you dream that there have not been moments when you have trusted your dear self here in my apartment that have been exquisite torture because of my so-called honorable restraint?"

"Of course, I know that you have felt that way toward me," Rose replied, dimpling just a trifle at the tribute to herself, "else I never should have said what I did. But you are too Puritanical for a person of your age, Max. You can afford to hold back when you are young but when you're older you must take what you can before it is too late."

"I'm too old now." He shrugged his shoulders with a laugh. "Have you forgotten Dorrie?"

"But you're not really her father."

"No, but I'm old enough to be, and Dorrie is seventeen or thereabouts. I must ask her how old she is when she comes home to-morrow."

Rose looked at him keenly, searchingly. "Has Dorrie come between us?"

He laughed. "No, Rose, dear, but thanks for the flattery just the same. Dorrie and I hardly know each other and I suspect that she selects her admirers from the ranks of young men just out of knickerbockers. She hasn't been home from school in two years and I've been too busy to go there. She thanks me for my checks but that is all. I suppose she will be with me a few days and then start off for somebody's house party and I shan't see her again until she graduates from college."

"You know there is a fatal attraction between bachelors and their wards."

"In fiction, maybe, but I can't recollect any case in real life."

"I suppose we shall meet occasionally." Rose gathered up her things that were strewn in intimate disarray about the apartment, a hat on the sofa, a scarf negligently draped over the piano and a parasol, an impudent blotch of color amid a group of sedate black umbrellas in his rack.

"You won't come here again?"

"No. Pardon the brutality, Max, dear, because it's breaking my heart, but I must spend my youth in a market where I get a greater return. Should you change your mind you will 'phone?"

He laughed. "Of course."

"I'll keep this harmless, necessary latch-key of yours against the day. Sometime it may make me smile. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

She was gone. What a wonderful woman, he thought, gazing reflectively at the door which had shut her out. He himself had taught her to take everything with good humor. How well she had learned that and a thousand other lessons. She had attained almost masculine stoicism. To break your heart courageously, to grieve smilingly and never to recriminate, these were the principal tenets of his faith and Rose had absorbed them from him as a woman who loves always absorbs the point of view of the immediate object of her devotion. But Rose had done more, she had achieved the practice of perpetual good humor. She was an unusual woman.

He would miss her—in a week he would realize that more poignantly than he did now—but he had retained his individuality—he was still the master of his destiny with no bonds of conscience to tie his hands or hobble his steps.

II

He was mistaken. The next afternoon Dorrie came. Dorrie needs little explanation. In fact it were wise not to attempt to account for her. Dickens could have made half a novel out of her antecedents and the events which led up to her being entrusted by her father to the care of his friend, Max Trelawney, who, as a book-loving bachelor of twenty-eight at the time, viewed with uneasiness the addition of a smallish girl to his household. She had been little care, however. Her education had been arranged for at convent schools where her entire life was supervised by the nuns and he had only been reminded of his charge at rare intervals. Once was when she had the measles and at another time it became necessary for him to decide against an earnest desire on her part to prepare herself to enter a nunnery. This last had not seemed wise to him then because of her youth and lack of experience. There would be plenty of opportunities after her education was complete.

He met her at the train early in the afternoon. When she descended the steps of the Pullman he stood for an instant without greeting her.

"Weren't you expecting me?" she asked finally.

"I wasn't expecting you to be like this," he admitted.

"How is 'like this'?"

"Why," he described vaguely, "with long skirts and things and your hair on top of your head."

"Oh, I'm quite grown up if that's what you mean," she assured him with perfect feminine poise. "I'd forgotten that you hadn't seen me for a couple of years. After all that isn't my fault you know."

"I suppose not," he murmured absently. "I've been terribly busy."

What is the mystic transformation that takes place in girl children anyway? One day they are all spindly arms and legs with silly, annoying giggles and the next they are magically pink and white creatures, pulsing with youth, pushing forward to the great adventure of life with hopes too high ever to be realized. Blossoming womanhood and spring are the dear, demented optimists of creation. If the expectations of one spring or of one glorious, golden girl were ever realized this world would be too perfect to live in.

And Dorrie was all and more than spring and youth could dare to promise. She was a beautiful lie that could never come true. To see her then was to doom your heart to unaccountable pain. It seemed a matter of personal grief to everyone that she could not stay as she was, that every second was carrying her away from the dear, delightful deceit that was mirrored so truthfully in her eyes.

"Aren't you going to kiss me?"

In faith he had not intended to. It seemed a sacrilege for masculine lips to touch that rounded cheek or, like the fathers in stories, press a benedictory salute upon that brow so softly framed in a nimbus of fairy spun gold.

But she did not expect him to kiss her cheek or her brow. She held up her lips, the upper one short and curling a wee bit, like the petal of a rose.

When it was done a sensation of relief came over him. It was so commonplace, it made her seem a little girl once more. She kissed him just as anyone would, just as Rose had done in those days, a century past it seemed, when seeing her was a part of his daily life.

Max recovered enough of his usual *sang froid* to take charge of her baggage and to escort her to the cab-rank outside the station. Some subtle instinct prompted him to select a hansom as the proper setting for his ward.

What a pity that there are so few of these formal, old-style equipages. The species is nearly extinct, crowded out first by the four-wheeler, and now by the nosey, efficient motor-taxi. But at what cost of romance! As an institution they are gone along with the crinoline and the duelling pistol. Can't you just see the dandies of a generation ago,

faultlessly attired in high hats and frock coats, their gloved hands resting idly on the heads of their canes, sitting proudly erect against a background of mauve cushions, being hustled off to oblivion in a long line of hansom-cabs with the doors flung open defiantly despite the chill of approaching autumn, their drivers flicking their black horses accurately with long-lashed whips as they turn proudly at the next corner down a quiet, shabby street that leads away from the Avenue but never back to it.

"And what are your plans for the summer?" Max managed to ask conventionally as they drove leisurely home.

She obliterated the profile he was raptly studying by turning toward him. "I have none. I thought I would stay home and keep house for you."

This was rather disconcerting. Max Trelawney's apartment had always kept itself. There was no ceremony about it, no foolish formalities, things were done by someone or other and you overpaid them for it but in return you were relieved from the necessity of being bored to death in a club.

"I thought," Dorrie went on seriously, "that if you didn't mind I would not go to school any more. The Sisters say that unless I expect to take up some special work it will not be necessary and I believe I would rather get some practical experience. I'm really quite competent. You'll be surprised at the things I can do."

Max sighed. He was not quite sure that the establishment of a chatelaine in his household would prove an unmixed blessing. Surely he would never voluntarily have picked so distracting a housekeeper.

"And in return," she requested modestly, "I hope you will want to take me with you wherever you go and show me the life of the city. I have seen very little and I do so want to have a good time."

There it was, the eternal hope of youth. Max knew that it was not possible to have the kind of a good time she looked forward to but he knew also that it would be fruitless to tell her so. Rather he must try to make it come true, to force back nature and logic and compel the unwilling world to yield up unalloyed pleasure.

"I'll do it," he exclaimed, flushed with a sudden contagious youthful enthusiasm. "The keys of the city shall be yours, the mayor will turn somersaults by request, and the polar bears in the park shall each have an extra piece of ice to remember you by. By royal manifesto all that is hideous must remain indoors during the period of this carnival and the citizens who appear upon the street must wear brightly colored holiday apparel. Black even for stockings is taboo. And Bulgarity becomes the order of the day."

She clapped her hands in appreciation of his mental evolutions. "Splendid," she exclaimed with shining eyes. "I never dreamed you would be like this or I should have come to live with you sooner. Think of the years we have wasted!"

So, a second woman said that to him —to Max Trelawney who had heretofore been conscious of having spent his years remarkably profitably. He wondered if his youth had been wasted. Some people might think so—did think so in fact. Perhaps books were a colorless substitute for life, possibly man's study of woman should be a laboratory course with experiments upon an original. It was strange that this slip of a girl had convinced him of that where the woman of yesterday had failed. The latter had offered him everything, this one nothing, could give him nothing in fact, and yet she was the more potent argument, had misted his past with regret that so many of his years had been chilled by the cold philosophy of books.

"When do we begin?" she asked breaking in upon his reverie with childish impatience.

"We've already begun," he declared positively. "If you'll listen you'll hear the birds just finishing the overture. The curtain is stirring faintly with the

fingerings of the actors who are looking out at us curiously to see what sort of a house it is. And here we have the scene for the first act."

III

He signalled the driver to stop and helped the girl to alight. Wondering she followed him between plate glass doors that bore a monogram but no name nor any indication of the business transacted inside.

Dorrie looked at her guide inquiringly. "Is it a store?"

"It's more like a cave—a treasure cave," he explained patiently. "We don't show this to everyone, but you, as the guest of the city, are allowed to examine the hidden stores and to choose for your own anything you like."

The business of the place became self evident as they proceeded down a wide aisle flanked by dignified solid show cases. These cases were filled with glittering jewels in unostentatious profusion. Solitaire diamond rings, enough for a thousand happy betrothals, gleamed coldly against the black velvet of their cases, sullen emeralds in tracery designs of platinum offered themselves unobtrusively while flaming opals signalled the eye with changing lights. Further on, barbaric bracelets loaded a showcase with a weight of metal and, beneath another glass, necklaces of precious stones dreamed longingly of the day when they would circle fair, soft throats instead of resting idly on pulseless satin pillows.

The girl moved through this Aladdin palace as in a trance, her lips parted in wordless admiration. She was wearing the severely simple grey uniform of the convent school with a plain little bonnet and a white fichu folded modestly over the creamy velvet of her neck and throat. It was as if a master jeweller, with an artistic eye for contrast, had placed one of the world's greatest diamonds in a lustreless setting of lead.

Salesmen looked after her with hurt eyes when she had passed—it seemed a personal loss when she moved from their sight—and the few customers in the store smiled indulgently at the rapt expression on the face of the beautiful rosebud in grey.

"What do you choose for your own?" Max asked when they had gone quite the entire length of the store and up and down each aisle.

She hesitated, torn between shyness and blossoming womanly desire to be adorned.

"Let her try on those pearls," Max suggested to a salesman, "that small strand with the rose tints in it."

It was a matter of seconds to remove the lustrous string from the showcase and clasp it around her eager young throat. They settled there contentedly as if they had been waiting always for that moment. Each lent beauty to the other, the pearls would never again attain their highest perfection away from the soft texture of her skin.

"They're yours," said her guardian with a sigh.

"Can we afford them?" suggested Dorrie practically.

"Of course not," Max replied absently. "One can never afford the most desirable things of life. That is why it is such exquisite pleasure purchasing them. Now I suppose that in order to pay for that trifling bauble you and I will have to go without nightingale's tongues for breakfast for a whole week, but I am willing if you are."

The transaction was closed. Max could not remember ever to have taken so much pleasure out of any single event in his life.

A similarly extravagant shopping campaign was conducted in other shops devoted to frocks, millinery, lingerie, boots and the like. Neither of them being hampered by preconceived ideas they asked simply for the best and thanks to the good taste of the salespersons who attended to their requirements their purchases were very satisfactory. You knew instantly upon seeing Dorrie that very simple things would suit her best and that ornamenta-

tion would only detract from the gentle loveliness of her face.

They had dinner in town, a gay little meal in a restaurant that had always seemed garish to him before. But now her smile and pervasive interest turned the flamboyant gilt to golden tracery and transformed the rag-time orchestra to weavers of far-away fairy melody. He was looking through a pair of rosy glasses—he thought that the lenses were in his own eyes—and was finding the world exceptionally pleasant.

Dorrie, too, all unconscious that she had inspired his gayety, throbbed with the thrills of first-tasted enjoyment. The music, the dancers who left their dinners to pirouette in the open spaces, the brilliantly gowned women, all fascinated her.

"I never knew that the world was such a beautiful place," she told Max engagingly. "The Sisters made me think that it was quite horrible. Why should they have deceived me?"

"Why does everyone deceive young girls?" Max countered, smiling. "The whole universe seems to be a conspiracy to fool the youth of both sexes. Poets do it and novelists. The breezes of heaven and the stars are liars all. And music more than anything else holds up a mirror to ourselves that reflects us only as we wish we were. But don't disbelieve, my dear, because the lies you are listening to now are the glorious lies that breathe the hope and faith of the future."

"Now I know why my father wanted me to be with you always," Dorrie told him with softly approving eyes. "I've often wondered why he gave me to you instead of to someone with a family. I see now that it was so that we could be everything to each other—that is if you wish."

She stopped short shyly as if she had impulsively said more than she had intended, more than she was sure he would care to hear.

His smile reassured her. "I'll try to live up to what you expect of me," he said in a voice that he tried to make quite matter-of-fact but which thrilled in spite of him.

They leisurely sipped the pleasures of budding intimacy amid the surroundings of the restaurant. She told him with naïve frankness details of her life at the convent in which he had not hitherto been interested but which he now found fascinating. She knew nothing, it appeared, but the circumscribed existence within religious walls. Life was an alluring book just opened to the first page.

Wisely he decided not to crowd her with experiences. It would be better to unfold the unfamiliar universe a bit at a time. Her pleasure would be keener if she could be allowed to cultivate sensations to the full before blunting them in a riot of succeeding excitements.

Therefore, he did not take her to the theater as had been his original intention, but proposed instead that they go home and get up early in the morning for a ride in the park before Max departed to his so-called office duties and Dorrie took up her new cares as housekeeper.

"I shall hope always to do as you wish," Dorrie assured him when he suggested this to her. He felt sure that she would have said the same if he had planned jumping into the river from a high bridge.

When they reached Max's apartment the living-room was piled high with fascinating packages, long boxes securely tied with broad tape, tall boxes with silk stripes in them, fastened with bows, bundles in severely modish black and white wrapping paper and hat cases with coquettish chiffon ribbons.

Max had as much fun opening them as she did. Never before had he known a personal interest in lingerie. Hitherto it had been only a word, a foreign word at that, connoting something that department stores made a tiresome fuss about in their advertisements. Now suddenly it became soft, billowy laces, fine-spun, close-fitting silk, and ribbon rosebuds nestling in unexpected but distracting places.

Of course they couldn't sleep until Dorrie had tried everything on, Max acting as lady's maid for the more intricate operations where hooking up the back was necessary. This once or twice brought him into disconcerting proximity with her rose-leaf shoulders that looked as if they would taste faintly of ambrosia should you touch them with your lips.

Max had no full-length mirror in his apartment, a lack which he promised to remedy immediately, so he had to tell her how really gorgeous she looked in each outfit. This was really not very difficult to do, and Max, who had previously felt the handicap of the tongue-tied, discovered in himself an admirable garrulity.

"This dress," he commented on one, "is best described as a floating cloud in a rose golden sunset, only I don't suppose any cloud before ever had such dimples in its arms."

"We're criticizing the dress," Dorrie reminded him severely, holding her arms up out of the way, she thought, but in reality bringing their soft, taper outlines into distracting prominence.

"Ah, yes," Max sighed, "but it's hard to tell where the dress leaves off and you begin. That, I suspect, is the sincerest compliment that it is possible to pay to a gown."

It was also the sincerest compliment that it was possible to pay a girl and Dorrie kissed him for it, a form of thanks which inspired him to emotional enthusiasm in his description of the next creation.

They were quite tired by the time Dorrie had tried on everything. Wearing the last one, she came from her bedroom, lately Max's own, and stood in the doorway.

"What do you think of this, Monsieur Max?" she asked timidly. "I ought not to show it to you, but it is too pretty never to be seen by anyone but me. When you bought it, did you dream it would look like this?"

Max successfully hid a gasp and replied in a hastily assumed matter-of-fact tone, "I never did."

The robes of angels would have seemed canvas compared to the texture of that night garment. And Dorrie looked like a little angel, too, only more interesting, as she stood diffidently in the doorway, the soft folds of silk clinging veraciously to unexpected curves.

"I'm going to try to sleep in it tonight," she said, "although I doubt whether it can be done. It's a shame the way you have made me vain. If the Sisters could see me now I'm sure they'd begin to say prayers for my soul."

"Surely it isn't wicked to be beautiful," Max objected soberly.

Dorrie sighed. "I don't know. Thanks just as much. I was speaking of vanity. Will it be all right if I put on my kimono over this and come out and sit for a little while in that red leather chair that looks as if it was somebody's grandfather's lap?"

"I think it will be all right," Max assured her gravely. "The chair you mention is blushing at the honor."

Dorrie curled up very unobtrusively with her feet successfully hidden and her doubled up knees clasped in her arms.

"Do you suppose I shall ever have so happy a day again?" she asked wistfully.

Max smiled as he thought how slightly he had tapped the world's resources of pleasure.

"I will try to arrange at least one more day that will be moderately pleasing," he prophesied with reserve. "And then, when I have done all I can, I'll send you to some people who can continue your butterfly education."

"But I don't want to be with anyone but you," she objected with naive positiveness. "From now on I am going to be an awful nuisance—we're going to have all our good times together."

IV

No one had ever so definitely taken possession of Max and his worldly

goods before. He discovered that he liked it. Dorrie's complacent attitude of owning him gave him a warm feeling like drinking sherry. He decided that it must be the family instinct, the subdued spirit of a paterfamilias, awaking in him. It was lucky that he had a ready-made family to hand. Undoubtedly he had wasted a great many years that he might have been a parent. Possibly the pleasure would be all the more poignant because long deferred.

When Max retired to the room he ordinarily used as a guest chamber, he lay awake a long time. He ascribed this to the fact that he was attempting to sleep in an unfamiliar bed, but if he had been able to see the fatuous smile that had become a permanent inhabitant of his features he would have known that he was being kept awake by pleasant thoughts.

He arose in the morning expecting to feel a trifle seedy as the result of a restless night. Of late he always felt weary in the morning, no matter what he had done the night before. But to-day he was astonished to discover that he felt perfectly fresh and that his mind looked forward to the day with eager impatience. He sought an explanation of this agreeable phenomenon with mild curiosity, but abandoned the search when he heard Dorrie laughing.

What could the child have discovered so early in the day to amuse her? No matter. Dorrie's laugh in itself was excuse enough for being. No one investigates the cause of the sunshine or asks why the birds sing instead of croaking.

From his room he telephoned for a couple of horses to be brought around and dressed hastily in riding clothes.

Dorrie was clad in a modest habit also and when he came out of his room she whirled up to him and planted a kiss in passing. He must break her of the habit of kissing him,—it might not be the proper thing,—but, and this he decided hastily, not for a few days. It might hurt Dorrie's feelings to tell her not to right away, and, besides—and besides,—well, there were lots of other reasons no one could possibly understand unless he had received a few of Dorrie's kisses. No, he would not insist that Dorrie grow up and become conventional all at once. Maybe he could train her gradually so that she would only kiss him once or twice a day, say on retiring and before breakfast.

It was the best morning for a ride that Max remembered ever to have encountered. There was a voltage in the air that made you smile in spite of yourself. Everyone seemed to be under the spell,—it was not confined simply to Dorrie and himself. Laborers on their way to work smiled in return for their cheery greetings, the tired horse on a returning milk wagon pretended to be frightened at a piece of whirling newspaper and cut up like a colt, and mongrel dogs, chasing their breakfasts through parkways and alleys, paused a moment to laugh at and with them. Even the clouds in the sky were tilted up at a gay and rakish angle and the vagabond breeze that explored the streets stopped idly now and again to kick aside a pile of rubbish playfully, just to annoy the industrious person who had carefully piled it up.

Yes, it was a gay, glad morning, a morning when invalids clutch once more at hope even though it deceived them only yesterday; a morning especially designed for signing peace conferences or for meeting again the sweetheart you had thought you were glad you had forgotten. Youth, a vandal, was going around recklessly putting his stamp here and there in the most incongruous places, here on an old ruin of building that staggered with decay, but sported bravely a bit of defiant green vine that clambered impudently across its breast, and there in the heart of a veteran who hobbled to the corner for his morning paper, but straightened up at attention and stepped off briskly when he heard a blaring bugle call, not knowing that it

only came from the waffle man advertising his wares in the next street.

"Thumpety, thump, thumpety, thump," beat the hoofs of the horses on the bridle path through the park, and sturdily their hearts kept time.

"Could we go faster?" asked Dorrie, looking around at him.

"I never have," he returned easily, "but we can."

Which was true. Alone, it had never occurred to him, with Dorrie the exhilaration of speed seemed eminently desirable. Headlong they dashed down a fair mile of straightaway, his coat-tails and her braids standing straight out in back as if the Sleepy Hollow bridge lay just behind.

In an hour they were home again, ready for breakfast. Max made the discovery that it is more fun to breakfast with a really beautiful girl than to dine with her. Anyone can invite her to the evening repast, but you have to be terribly intimate to eat the first meal of the day in her company.

Breakfast had heretofore been rather an ordeal to Max. Some of the cobwebs of night always persisted to take away the flavor of what had doubtless been excellent coffee and toast all the time. But now it was a sparkling ceremony. Who would ever have imagined that there would be a keener relish in food simply because opposite to you sat a substantial, pink-cheeked female whose skin, where visible on face and arms, looked as if it would be as cool and soft as—as cool and soft as nothing in the world but a girl's skin can be, there is nothing to compare it with?

"How long will you be away today?" Dorrie asked as they sat idly sipping their coffee.

"Why?"

"I shall be lonesome for you to get back," she replied frankly. "You've spoiled me already. I want someone to look at me the way you do."

"What?" ejaculated Max, startled. "How do I look at you?"

"Why, I don't know. I guess it's the way you always look at people, but I like it. It's quite different from the way the Sisters did. Your eyes are kind of bright and shiny and devouring. If I didn't know you wouldn't bite I'd be a little afraid of you. And I think if I saw you looking at any one else like that I'd be mad at her. So I want to be with you myself to make sure. When will you be home?"

"In time for tea," Max promised, with a show of reluctance which he put on chiefly to deceive himself.

V

On the way to his office Max was vaguely conscious of an uneasiness in his constitution that he was inclined to locate in his mind, but which his heart persistently claimed. It was very disturbing and seemed to consist of an internal debate as to whether he was "thirty-eight" or "only thirty-eight." There is considerable difference as you may know if you happen to be somewhere near that age yourself. If you think of yourself as "only" a certain age it means that you are contemplating something silly and you are trying to convince yourself that it is all right and quite dignified.

Max's recollection of Dorrie's damnable innocent perfection raised Ned with his business affairs for the day. Fortunately his business did not amount to much. His father had been a provident pioneer in the banking field and all Max really had to do was to collect interest at regular intervals and talk to several competent real estate agents who could be depended upon to make up his mind for him if necessary. To-day he signed leases with a fine abstraction and once he called a man "Dear" whose real name was Horace Perkins. Perhaps he was only practising.

Every tedious person had been seen at last and Max was on the point of leaving his stenographer in charge of his office and making a dash for home, when Richard Trelawney walked in, smiling and sure of a welcome. Richard Trelawney was more familiarly

known as "Little Dick" to distinguish him from his father, who bore the name before him. His father, Max's brother, had passed away long since, and so had Dick's littleness, but the name persisted in spite of six feet of young human cub.

Dick was Max's favorite nephew, and a large share of Dick's college expenses had been donated from Max's purse. There had been a crying need for someone to help with the young man's education because his father, inspired with overconfidence in his business acumen, had just previous to his death invested all his capital in a financial skyrocket.

Just now, however, even Dick, viewed as a stumbling block in the path to Dorrie, seemed inopportune.

"Well, Little Dick?" Max said interrogatively.

"I'm through."

"Through what? Be more definite. Through teething? Or through with women? Or cigars? Or ice-cream soda? What is it you are leaving behind?"

"School." Little Dick waited patiently until Max had rung all the changes on his idea. "You said when I graduated from college I was to come to you and you would help me to get started."

"Oh, yes, of course," Max remembered with a certain amount of regret. "It will be easy to find something for a lad like yourself to do."

Surely he was right. Little Dick was the sort of young man to get anything he wanted from anybody, man, woman or child. He looked something like Max, which was in his favor, only not so studious or earnest, with an eye which would not see so much in books but which would go far deeper into the souls of his fellows. Further he had as intelligent a smile as you'd meet in a day's journey. Smiles, you know, can be as detrimental to a face as frowns, if they aren't directed by a class A man in the conning tower. A ready grin can grease the way to almost anywhere, but a continuous and vacuous display of ivory without reference to occasion can also inspire an almost unconquerable desire to grasp the smiler by the seat of the rompers and show him the door.

"Come with me," said Max, "and we'll talk about your future on the way to my apartment. I'm supposed to be there for tea."

Little Dick made no objection and they caught the first car.

"Let's see," said Max, considering politely the accomplishments of his relative, "you were headed toward a degree in philosophy. Did you attain it?"

"I did," his nephew replied modestly, "not entirely alone and unaided, however, I have to admit. My graduation reflects considerable credit upon nearly half the members of my fraternity, who sat up with me nights and stuffed my system with learning and hot coffee just before the examinations."

"I merely asked in order to get a line on your ability," explained his uncle. "If I try to place you in a position to which there is a salary attached your employer is quite apt to want to know what your attainments are."

"I can run two miles as fast as anybody in the United States," Dick asserted diffidently.

Max shook his head.

"No good?" queried Dick, disappointed. "I can do a few tricks with a football that made an awful hit with Walter Camp last season, but I guess they wouldn't help any in business, either. I'm afraid everything else I know is in the line of parlor stuff. They say I dance pretty well and I can sing better than any tom-cat you ever met. Also I know a little French, German and Spanish, a mess of each. I liked modern languages the best of anything at school, and I always did pretty well in them. What do you think? Will Big Business quiver when I enter the arena?"

Max tabulated Dick's rather negligible accomplishments in his mind for future reference. "To-morrow we'll

see what we can do. Here's where we get off. I can't invite you to come and stay with me while you're in town because the spare room is already in use, but you can come to tea if you like."

"Not that I feel hurt about not being invited to roost on your roof-tree, you understand," began Dick, "but might I ask who is using your spare room?"

"I am."

"The mystery thickens. I suppose you are keeping a pet rhinoceros in your own comfortable suite with bath."

"No," declared Max uneasily. "Just now Dorrie is staying there."

"Dorrie? I seem to have heard the name before,—I know,—she's the girl somebody wished on you just before he died. Hard luck, Uncle Max, to have a youngster like that on your hands. Do you have to feed her from a bottle or can she drink her malted milk from a glass without a chaser?"

Max grinned. "You can see for yourself."

He threw open the door of his apartment.

"Dorrie," he called.

"Yes, dear."

There it was, the echo of the name he had been unconsciously speaking all the afternoon.

Before he could think she overwhelmed him with a mad rush from the living room and pressed her eager young lips to his in a kiss of warm welcome.

"It has been lonely without you," she said shyly when she noticed Dick's presence.

"This is Dick Trelawney, Dorrie," he introduced the young man. "He is my nephew, and I hope you will like him. He is almost a relative of yours, too."

Dick was affected the way almost everyone was at the sight of Dorrie, that is, he gazed at her in speechless amazement as if he expected her to vanish into the air. Then, too, Dick had to readjust his preconceived notion that she was a babe in arms.

Max was as proud of the impression she made as if he had invented her himself. "Speak to her, Dick. She's alive."

"Of course she's alive," repeated Dick. "Thank heaven for that. If she were only a picture, think how she'd make your heart ache."

"She will anyway, my boy. I'm afraid that's her business in life. Come on, Dorrie, nobody wants any tea, but it's the next thing to do."

Max led the way to a social group of easy chairs, conspicuous among them the maroon leather one that was still smiling to itself in remembrance of the burden it had held the night before.

"Little Dick has come to discuss his future," explained Max as they sat watching Dorrie's nimble evolutions with the tea things. "We, as a committee, are met to provide him with an aim in life."

"You've already done that, Uncle Max," murmured Dick cryptically.

"Never mind calling me uncle," interjected Max resentfully. "It was all right when you were only an inch or so high, but now that you've assumed the proportions of a derrick it makes me feel too confounded old."

"But you're not," Dorrie assured him hastily, almost too hastily for conviction. "I'm sure you're not nearly so serious-minded as Mr. Trelawney. He has an aim in life, he says so himself, while I'm afraid you haven't any yet."

What a change had come into life since the day before yesterday! Then he was content to spend his leisure among the heroes and heroines of history, now Phryne and Helen and Horace's Lydia and Virgil's Dido all seemed very dead and uninteresting indeed, and nothing in the world really mattered save the curl in Dorrie's upper lip and the way the sun made mist of her hair when she stood against the light.

"If you have evening clothes with you, you may come to the theater with us," invited Max when Little Dick rose to go. "The reason why we have to dress is that Dorrie has a gown that

can't wait another day to be worn in public, and we'll have to try to live up to her."

"I'll be there," promised Dick gratefully.

"We have a box," said his uncle, "and if you wish to bring anyone there is plenty of room."

After Little Dick had gone, "He has a nice smile," said Dorrie. "I think I like him."

"I think you'd better," admonished Max. "Little Dick is one of our responsibilities. To escort him painlessly through the troubles that beset a youth at the beginning of his career is our duty and pleasure."

"We shall be his fairy godmothers," agreed Dorrie, "and whatever is good for him we'll let him have and whatever isn't we'll keep away."

"You get the idea almost immediately," Max applauded. "I only hope we shall always know what is good for him. Young people nowadays want so many things that it is going to be difficult always to tell what is best."

"We can easily settle that," suggested the girl.

"How?"

"We'll try everything first ourselves."

VI

They dined comfortably at home, Dorrie presiding over the feast like a chiffon fairy, her cheeks healthily pink with the excitement of being dressed up and about to attend an evening theater party. Her acquaintance with the drama so far had been confined to an occasional Saturday matinee with a chaperoned crowd of girls from school.

Max had given Dick tickets, and when they arrived at the theater his nephew was already in the box. There was a lady sitting with him. Max, in an absent-minded way, wondered who it might be and admired casually her beautiful and somewhat lavishly displayed back. When she turned, though, he was genuinely surprised and puzzled. It was Rose.

"Wasn't it good of Little Dick to invite me to your theater party?" she asked, smiling at his surprise. "He swears that you told him to do it, but I know that it never occurred to you. I came anyway because I wanted to meet Dorrie."

Her speech obviated the necessity of introductions, and Dorrie took to her so easily and naturally that Max was secretly glad that the meeting had happened.

"She didn't want to come at first," explained Dick in an undertone to his uncle, "but when I told her what a corker your ward is she changed her mind. I thought you'd be glad to have her along. You used to be pals."

"I certainly am glad. If we're not pals now it isn't my fault."

"She certainly is a stunning-looking woman," Little Dick admired. "How different those two are!"

Which was just what Max was thinking himself. They reminded him of sunset and moonlight. The vivid, warm beauty of Rose O'Callan satisfied the eye like the close of an October day, but when you looked at the unconscious loveliness of Dorrie you had to make an effort to keep your heart beating. Still it was a pleasurable pain and one that bore repeating without any apparent permanent damage to the constitution. Max sighed with regret as he realized that it was only yesterday he had begun to have those attacks. Truly a large portion of his life had been wasted.

The play was Sheldon's "Romance," with Doris Keane acting the principal part. If Max had known beforehand how frankly outspoken the heroine was he would have chosen some other attraction for Dorrie's initial appearance, but the girl seemed not to notice particularly the lack of convention and she leaned forward eagerly to drink in all the wistful beauty of the story. Once, during the second act, she reached back and grasped his hand in an unconscious desire to share her emotion with someone. This was another impulsive act to correct sometime,—but not yet.

Max looked up quickly to see if Rose had seen. She had and was regarding him now with eyes filled with quiet speculation. Max wasn't quite sure what he expected to find in Rose's eyes, but assuredly it was not what he did see. Back in his mind he kept wondering about it for some time.

Rose's entire attitude was puzzling. When, after the play, they introduced Dorrie to the qualified delights of a cabaret supper, the older woman was especially baffling. Max had never known her to be more charming.

"Why didn't you tell me Dorrie was so wonderful?" she asked him aside as they were settling themselves at a table.

"Faith, I didn't know it," he told her. "Do you suppose I never noticed her before because my mind was so full of you?"

"Was it only your mind, Max?" she asked half wistfully. "Sure, it must have been, because your heart wasn't running till yesterday."

"How do you know?"

"How do I know? I asked your doctor, of course." Rose laughed with unaffected gaiety. Max was such a dear blunderer. "He said that somebody right at the beginning had forgot to wind up your heart at all, and then after you were born they sent a lot of people after you to attend to it. But none of us had the right key until Dorrie came along." She looked smilingly at the eager-faced girl, who was watching everything that went on about her. "I hope she never winds it up too tight."

"Rose, as usual, you're talking a lot of highly embroidered, beautiful nonsense."

"I'm not. I'm speaking of vital statistics which to your learned mind should be intensely interesting."

Yes, Rose had a way of saying things. That was one of the chief things he liked about her. Now with Dorrie her cleverness was not what you noticed at all. Come to think of it, maybe she hadn't any. Surely she didn't need it.

"Will it be all right for me to dance with Dick?" Dorrie asked him.

Max turned to Rose.

"Is it?"

Rose thought a moment. "Unless it would be a great disappointment I should say it would be better not to dance here, not until after you are married anyway."

Dorrie hastened to assure her, "Oh, it's all right. I don't really care at all."

"Instead," Rose continued, "I'll give a party at the Country Club for you and we'll have all the dancing we want there. When shall it be—next week sometime? You should be introduced to the younger set as soon as possible. We'll make it just a small crowd, then you can get acquainted with the rest through them."

"I think she is the most wonderful woman I ever saw," Dorrie decided when she and Max were alone at home once more. "I wonder why she is being so nice to me?"

"I suppose she can't help it," Max declared soberly, although the same question was puzzling him even more than it had Dorrie. "You know you've got a way with you, young fluffy head, that is hard to resist."

"I hope that no one tries to," she mused.

"Heaven help us if they don't!" exclaimed her guardian in mock horror. "We can't have the parlor cluttered up all the time with admirers waiting for their morning smile. There aren't quite enough of them for me as it is."

"Imagine being flattered like that by your own darling family," said Dorrie, scrambling out of her chair to go and sit on the arm of his. "Lean your head forward a little so I can put my arm in there all comfy, because if you're apt to say any more nice things I'm going to stay up all night for fear I might miss something."

"No, you're not," Max decided suddenly, impelled somewhat by the shock of her cool, encircling arm against his cheek. "You're going to bed right this

minute so as to be ready for a ride in the morning."

He stood up and lifted her easily as he rose.

"I won't go to bed," she declared.

"You can't help yourself." He strode resolutely to her room, put her down inside and closed the door after him as he went out.

He sat for a long time before retiring himself and puffed contentedly on a favorite pipe. His thoughts were comfortably indefinite ones, flitting pleasantly from subject to subject, but concerning themselves not at all with the persons of ancient history who had once been wont to people his studious brain.

"Oh, guardian," sang out a voice behind him.

"Yes." He bestirred himself from a half-waking reverie.

"I haven't been kissed good-night yet."

"Do you have to be?"

"No-o, but it seems too bad not to be, so long as it makes me feel as if I belonged to someone at last."

He got up and went into her room, so lately his. It was strange how easily it had been transformed from a man's apartment by the mere spreading around of a few feminine odds and ends. She was in bed and had turned out the light, but a sheaf of moonbeams came in through the window.

Max knelt down beside her bed.

"Good-night, Dorrie," he said.

"What a nice, smelly pipe you've been smoking," she observed critically. "It stings on your lips, doesn't it?"

"I'm sorry. I didn't expect to see you again to-night."

"Don't apologize. I like it and I want to get used to it." She drew his head down once more.

"Good-night."

He released her soft white shoulders and tiptoed from the room as if she were already asleep.

VII

The next day Little Dick showed up at the office to remind his uncle that he needed employment, and Max referred the matter to his capable advisers in the banking and real estate field. They, in turn, said noncommittally that they would see what could be done about it, wishing heartily but inaudibly that relatives of friends and business associates would not apply for positions, especially in slack seasons. Some business men regard colleges as a training school for incompetent help.

When Max entered the door of his apartment that afternoon he waited expectantly for the greeting which the rattle of his latch-key would bring forth.

There was no sound.

Vaguely disappointed, he walked unescorted to the living room. Dorrie was not there.

Possibly she was taking a nap. He went to her room and pushed the door gently ajar. The bed was empty save for a soft, rumply house dress which had been carelessly draped across its footboard. A pair of thin silk stockings lay in a chair and in front of it, as if they had been kicked off by a person sitting there, was a pair of slippers, one standing up and the other fallen over on its side. You could reconstruct without effort the hasty change of apparel which Dorrie had performed.

Quite obviously Dorrie had gone out. Max felt unaccountably lonesome.

He wandered back to the living room, which seemed larger than necessary and full of remote empty corners. On the table, weighted down with a paper-knife, lay a sheet of note paper which he had not noticed before. He picked it up. Dorrie's sprawly, childish handwriting was easily recognizable.

"Miss O'Callan and Little Dick called for me," the note ran, "and took me to the Country Club. You're to come over as soon as you change your things for tennis. You and I are going to beat them two sets before dinner."

It was a simple enough explanation

of her absence, yet the incident served to show him how he had grown to look forward to finding someone at home when he returned.

On the porch of the Country Club he found Rose O'Callan waiting for him, spotless and cool in white flannels. Dorrie and Dick, she informed him, had gone for a ramble somewhere together.

"I elected to wait and amuse you until they came back."

He thanked her. How curiously like a mere acquaintance Rose had become. Formerly they had been so intimate that their thoughts need scarcely be spoken, and now he felt a sense of being held at a distance even in her speech. She was not any less friendly than she had been, but she was more individual. Where she had once been content to reflect him he now found, to his surprise, quite a different and striking personality.

"Little Dick is very like you," Rose told him, "except that he has developed more positiveness."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, he is more direct. I have an idea that if he wanted anything he would get it. With you, Max, it is different. I believe you could get anything you want, but you refuse to make the effort."

Dorrie and Dick came back in half an hour.

"I wanted to come sooner," she explained, "but Dick wouldn't let me. He said you never left the office until four."

"Apparently Dick has not been keeping track of his uncle's new habits," observed Rose. "But don't apologize. It has given me half an hour of Max's interesting, though somewhat absent-minded, attention that I should not otherwise have had."

"If you like," suggested Dick eagerly, "we'll leave you alone with him some more."

"No," Rose protested. "I refuse for both of us. Max is too polite, but I'm not, thank heaven, and I've known him long enough to be able to prescribe for him. Another half hour of me, undiluted, would be fatal."

Almost all of the subtle sting in Rose's remark passed unnoticed over Max's head, then to be remembered later and puzzled over. He was too vividly happy in a painful sort of way to be conscious of anything much except the youth of Dorrie, who, as she had promised in her note, played tennis on his side of the net. She did very well, too, and Max, who played an excellent though slightly academic game, modeled on the principles of old-fashioned whist, found himself becoming momentarily more brilliant. The girl had jolted him into a higher rate of vibration in every respect.

Dorrie in action was well worth anyone's attention. She had to reprove him once or twice for letting an easy drive get past him because he was thinking too intently of the filip of her full, short skirt as it whirled about her ankles at the conclusion of a net play or of the strong perfection of her rounded arm, crooked and dimpled for a backhand volley.

"When you put your mind on the game," Dorrie applauded during a lull while they were changing courts, "you play almost as well as Little Dick, and he's been in training all the year."

Max wasn't sure whether he cared for the comparison or not. It depended on whether it was blatant flattery offered to an older man or a sincere criticism. As they won the set, he chose to interpret it as the latter.

There was a crowd of young people at the club that afternoon, and instead of going home for dinner they all stayed at the club and had an *al fresco* supper together. It seemed as good a way as any to introduce Dorrie informally to society. It was as much a debut for Max as it was for the girl. True, he had belonged to the club always, but he had not known its members, especially the ones of the coming generation, had not cared to know them, in fact. Persons younger than thirty had always impressed him heretofore as immature human beings not

worth wasting time on until they ripened. Now he made the astonishing discovery that what he had taken for silliness was only a very admirable show of animal spirits and verve which he was desirous of emulating.

Among other things he found out that it was fun to howl the words of popular and other songs in unison with a crowd and to keep time with your knife and fork on the table china, that it is more desirable to be able to do a few comedy tricks with a napkin than to translate Latin and Greek at sight, that a good story is worth its weight in laughter and that he who can flirt openly and without embarrassment with his table companion is greater than he that taketh a city.

The others took him at his face value. Because they had not known him well they were not particularly astonished at his shameless lack of dignity. The mere picture of a good-looking middle-aged man in horn-rimmed spectacles trying to drink out of a glass without using his hands may have seemed a trifle incongruous *per se,* but it did not appear the crime that it would have had they known the Max Trelawney of the day before yesterday. Dorrie taught him the glass trick along with a number of other rather messy ones fresh from the boarding-school world. Girls must be bored to death in those institutions, judging from the diversions they get up to drive dull care to the suburbs.

The high point of the evening as far as Max was concerned was reached when he happened to recollect the only stunt he had ever performed in his undergraduate days at the university. It was a silly trick, but in the old days had been regarded with prime favor by the wary freshmen whom his fraternity brothers had lured into the chapter house for rushing purposes.

One of the nameless young men in the party had recited an alleged comic poem and Little Dick had given a gratuitous imitation of a victrola, accomplished by standing in a closet and singing with the door wide open, half closed and shut to represent the sound control of the machine. They turned expectantly to Max as the next in line. It was while they were urging him with polite applause that he remembered it.

"I'll do a trick," he volunteered, "if someone will kindly lend me a piano."

There was one in the next room and someone shoved it in.

"Consider your bluff called," said Little Dick.

Fifteen years it was since Max had thought of it, but the details struggled back to his mind hastily as he left his seat and went over to the instrument.

"In dese here payano," he said in what he fondly imagined was a Norse dialect, "Aye shall always keep me a pet shicken. He bane a educated hen and Aye shall show you how I teach him to sing."

Thereupon Max lifted the lid and pretended to talk to Lena, which appeared to be the name of the chicken which was using the pianoforte for a coop. Lena clucked but refused to come out, mentioning that she was not dressed and half a dozen other excuses which Max translated to the spell-bound company.

Finally he rolled up his sleeve and plunged an arm inside. A prodigious squawking ensued, which grew louder as he brought the imaginary bird out and placed her, still remonstrating, on the music rack.

"Now, Lena," he commanded, "you shall sing for the ladies and gentlemen about the 'Star Strangled Banana.'"

It was old stuff, but his audience giggled appreciatively. Then ensued an argument between Max and the performer in which Lena advanced reasons why she couldn't sing that evening, chief among them being that she had eaten a caterpillar that tickled her every time he turned around in her crop.

Finally Max silenced all objections and gave her the key on the piano. After several false starts the hen got away and clucked hoarsely through a verse and chorus of our national anthem, Max accompanying her on the

piano and coaching her audibly. At the conclusion and while she was still holding the high note Max stood up abruptly, lifted the piano lid, stuffed her back in once more and closed it, thus shutting her off midway in the final squawk.

The applause that greeted his bow was overwhelming. A flush of pleasure suffused Max's features. The approval of one's fellow men was sweeter than he had realized.

"Do some more! Do some more!" his audience urged.

Max did not know anything more to do and so he laughingly retired with all the honors of the evening. Thereafter he was a marked man. Nevermore would he be allowed to mingle with his fellows without bringing along Lena, the pet hen.

But most of all he sought and found laughing appreciation in Dorrie's eyes. For her he had, figuratively speaking, stood on his head and he wanted to be sure that he had attained the coveted result.

"It was better than any circus," she praised frankly. "Dick and I laughed ourselves sick over it, didn't we, Dick?"

"Dick and I,"—that phrase proved a minute fly in the ointment. He had not planned particularly to amuse Dick. A glance at Dick's smiling features, however, dispelled the swift stab of resentment that had pierced his uncle's breast. Of course it was natural that he and Dorrie should seek each other out and sit side by side. They were comparative strangers to the others in the room. Still——

He did not feel quite the same toward the world until Dorrie kissed him good-night in the secluded and intimate haven of their own home.

VIII

Next day he devoted considerable time to the quest of employment for his nephew. He had no ulterior motive, that he explained elaborately and frankly to himself, but it was not well for a young man of Dick's energy to be idle for long.

But paying positions for men without special training seemed to be scarce: capital was wary about investing in unimproved brains. Max had about given up in despair when Rose called him at the office.

"I know you don't like to be bothered during business hours," she explained hastily over the telephone, "but this is in the nature of business and I was afraid it wouldn't wait."

Max had always loved the sound of her voice. It did not lose much by being heard over a telephone. There was a brown velvet quality about it that was very warm and soothing.

"Speak on," he urged. "If you have a gold-plated brick to sell, send it around and I'll buy it."

"You're looking for a job for Little Dick, aren't you?" she asked, coming to the point at once.

"I am."

"Any luck?"

"None to speak of so far."

"Did I understand rightly that he speaks a little Spanish?"

"Why, yes, quite a bit, so he says."

"Good." She paused. "I think I know just the thing for him. My brother is just beginning to pick up some export business in South America, and he wants an American representative down there to take care of the rather complicated banking that has to be done on their accounts. Do you think Dick could do it?"

South America? That sounded very far away.

"I don't know whether Dick would want to leave this country," Max doubted.

"Of course he would. Ask him. He's unmarried, you know, with absolutely no ties to hamper him. I should think he would look forward to it as an adventure. Don't forget that Dick is different from yourself, Max. You are Hamlet, but he is Othello. The things that appall you as ideas he would accomplish as deeds without hesitation. Anyway, I told my brother to hold it open until he had seen Dick. You

know where his warehouse is. If Dick doesn't even want to try it, telephone word, because there are several ready to take the position."

After all, thought Max when Rose had closed the conversation, it might not be so bad for Dick to go to South America. Since the war there were wonderful opportunities there for American trade. Dick would probably be able to come back in three or four years. In three or four years Dorrie would be—what did it matter what Dorrie would be?—it was Dick he was thinking about. It would do no harm to leave it up to Dick.

Max sent for him. Just as Rose had said, Dick was fascinated with the idea. Max felt almost guilty at having painted it to him so rosily. They went over together to call on Rose O'Callan's brother, a horny-handed business man who, from his looks, had no right to be her brother save for a wee clever twinkle in his eye.

"A hundred dollars a month and your expenses," he said, looking Dick over approvingly, "that is, if you're single, which I can see that you are from the mildly curious roving eye of you. If you were a married man I'd give you a hundred and fifty and allow your wife's expenses into the bargain."

"I'll take it," decided Dick with princely disregard for the other details of his job. "When do I start?"

"Next week, Thursday," Mr. O'Callan replied, consulting a memorandum on his desk calendar, "but you'll have to be here every day until you go, learning the details of the business."

Dick left the place full of the exaltation that must have been Columbus' on that sunny day in Spain when Queen Isabella decided to finance his venture with her personal jewelry.

But when they both went home and told the news to Dorrie there came a new angle into the affair. Dorrie turned suddenly white and would have fallen had not both Max and Dick caught her by the arm.

"Why, what's the matter, dear?" demanded Dick, just as naturally as if it were his ward that he was addressing.

"Nothing," she confessed, "except that South America is an awfully poor place to have anyone you like, especially if you live in North America yourself."

"But he'll write to us," suggested Max cheerfully. "Won't you, Little Dick?"

"I'll write to you every day."

He looked at Dorrie when he said "you," so that Max had a vaguely uncomfortable feeling that he was not included by the pronoun. This impression prevailed so strongly during the next few moments of conversation in which Dick outlined his intentions that Max wandered off and let Little Dick explain things for himself. After all, it was his funeral.

When Max came back Dorrie was quite cheerful. Little Dick was telling her all he knew about South America, said information having been gleaned from sundry stories by O. Henry and Richard Harding Davis, and hence having rather a high flavor.

"Just the same," Dorrie said apprehensively, "I hope they don't have any of their old revolutions until you get back, and you must promise not to let them elect you president of any of their countries, because the presidents always get killed."

"I promise," Dick agreed readily.

When Rose O'Callan found out how soon Dick was leaving she very obligingly changed the arrangements for her party so that Dick could be there the night before he sailed. The older woman commandeered the services of Dorrie to help make arrangements, and Dick spent his days learning the prosaic details of his new business, so that Max found himself without society. This condition he vaguely resented. Dorrie might be spared to him anyway. But no, whenever he wanted her to go anywhere she was either at the club with Rose or deep in a conversational ramble with Dick.

"Dick is going so soon," she explained sweetly, "that I feel as if I

ought to be especially nice to him."

The fact that Dick was going so soon was the pleasantest thought that entered Max's mind. He felt like a selfish beast, too, but he found it not at all difficult to contemplate a Dickless future all jewelled with afternoons and evenings with Dorrie, just as it had been when she first came in the time that seemed so long ago.

Then came the evening of the party. Dorrie spent hours dressing for it, and then when she came out of her room she had on the little grey dress she had worn when she came from the convent.

"I tried on everything else," she explained piteously, "but they all seemed too gay. Supposing Little Dick never came back."

She was pale, too, and so was Max, unaccountably so. He had noticed it as he stood before his mirror tying his dress tie. His dark hair, becomingly long, had framed a pallid face the only vivid features of which were his burning, eager eyes. Thank heaven, these good-bye parties did not come every day.

The club had been decorated in turbulent reds and yellows, with here and there a heraldic shield containing the royal arms of Spain, the parent country of the Latin-American republics. A stringed orchestra played a pulsing Argentine tango. It was well done, the atmosphere had been painstakingly simulated. One surprise had been kept even from Dorrie. The girls, by Rose O'Callan's request, were costumed in the style of the southern sister nations. Mantillas, sashes, lace shawls, earrings, had been requisitioned in profusion.

Alone, amid that riot of warm and clashing color, Dorrie in modest grey stood out a vision of pale loveliness. If she had planned to wear the most conspicuously daring costume there she could not have been more striking.

They danced, quietly and sedately at first, the entire roomful of young people moving together to the slow and plaintive seduction of the music, then faster and more madly as the evening wore on and the American honky-tonk motive overpowered the Spanish love theme.

Dick danced often with Dorrie. It was his right. He knew her best of all the company and he might not see her again for many years, maybe never again. Max told himself that as he watched them move off together.

At supper they sang as they always had. Someone started:

"The Spanish cavalier stood in his retreat,
And on his guitar played a tune, dear.
The music so sweet, he'd oft' times repeat
The blessings of my country and you, dear.

"I'm off to the wars, to the wars I must go,
And sometimes I may think of you, dear.
The bright, sunny days will soon pass away,
Remember what I say and be true, dear."

It was the veriest doggerel, but when it was done Max glanced up to find Dorrie and Little Dick looking into each other's eyes as if they were standing all alone on the top of a remote mountain. Down Dorrie's cheek ran an unheeded tear.

"Let's have something gay," suggested Rose, who also must have noticed.

"Lena, the singing hen," said someone else and the idea was adopted eagerly. "Lena, Lena," they shouted, punctuated with hand-clappings.

Max rose uncertainly. The penalty of being an entertainer is that you must be funny whether you feel like it or not. It isn't so hard beneath clown white, but when there is no paint to mask your face and your heart it becomes more difficult.

Still, he went to the piano and memory prompted him to the same intonations and the same bits of comedy busi-

ness. It fooled the audience and when he finished the laughter and applause were no less than they had been before.

But when he turned around to bow and also to catch Dorrie's approving eye his smile suddenly straightened out.

Dorrie was not there. Neither was Little Dick.

IX

THE dancing was resumed. After a while Dorrie and Dick returned, very quiet. They seemed to have nothing to say to each other.

Then finally came the time to say good-bye. Dick was to leave in the morning, so everyone clustered around to bid him Godspeed.

Dorrie took Rose's hand in farewell. "It's the happiest time I ever had," she said, "and also the most miserable. I hope you understand."

"I think I do, dear," Rose replied, and kissed her. On the steps of the Country Club the boys and girls were singing "Good-night, Ladies."

Max opened the door of the limousine for Dorrie.

She hesitated. "Would you mind if I walked home with Little Dick?" she asked.

Max rode all by himself. When he arrived the apartment seemed cold. He lit a fire in the grate and sat before it, smoking, to wait for Dorrie.

Three o'clock struck, then four. The dawn greyed the east windows. Max got up and paced the floor.

Finally he heard voices, hushed and murmuring in the hallway. There was silence for a space and the door opened.

Dorrie came in alone. She was pale, listless and dry-eyed, but she walked up to Max and took hold of his coat-lapels.

"You won't let me be unhappy, will you?" she pleaded anxiously.

Max put his hungry arms about her grey-clad figure. "Never, dear," he promised, as if accepting a sacred trust.

"That's what I told Little Dick," she said with a sigh. "Everything will come out all right so long as I have you."

It was a long time before she kissed him good-night. They sat wordless before the fire. It seemed a night for speaking silences. To-morrow maybe she would tell him all that was in her heart and then, too, he would uncover the secret of his soul, but now it was better to sit quietly in the great red leather chair together and figure it all out in the fire.

The sunrise discovered them.

What a frail, pale thing girlish beauty is! Dorrie, with all the roses gone from her cheeks and her lips tired and drooping, was none the less the loveliest thing that Max had ever pictured in his dreams.

She seemed loath to part from him, and when they stood up she buried her eyes in the shelter of his shoulder.

"How can I ever repay you for being so good to me?" she asked.

Max lifted her face between his two palms and gazed earnestly into her eyes.

"By letting me love you as long as I live," he said soberly.

Something of doubt came to those eyes. She wavered a moment as if about to ask a question, and then decided not to.

"Whatever happens, ever," she murmured, "no one shall take your place in my heart."

She held up her lips, child-fashion, to be kissed, and when he leaned over to her she slipped her arms around his neck and drew him close to her in a long embrace.

When she released herself she turned and ran to her own room.

X

THE poor child was overwrought, thought Max. The excitement of the party, the late hours and the parting from Dick had been too much for her. Things would soon settle back into a comfortable routine once more.

Thence onward his thoughts chose a

pleasant path down which Dorrie and he wandered hand in hand. He shamelessly admitted that he could not do without her. He loved her madly, he knew it and admitted it. There was no use in deceiving himself or anyone. The relationship of guardian and ward was absurd between them. He was too young,—how could he be expected to resist her? Surely her father would approve of Max as Dorrie's husband. Until to-night he had hardly stated to himself the depth of his feeling. She cared for him, too. There could be no mistaking the sincerity of her feeling when she kissed him good-night.

Rose had told him that he never got what he wanted because he did not go after it strong enough. She was mistaken. To-morrow he would begin a siege of Dorrie's heart that could end only one way. He was rich, fairly good-looking and "only thirty-eight." Why shouldn't he win? With the thought of the roseate and triumphant to-morrow in his mind and Dorrie's name curving his lips into a smile he fell asleep.

Those old boys who wrote the Greek and Roman epics and were the real inventors of the moving picture "cut-back" used to stop a story at about this point and tell what Zeus and Hebe and Diana and Venus, especially Venus, were doing and saying while the lay-figures of the narrative slept on their strings, so to speak. The gods always managed to frame up something particularly strenuous while the heroes and heroines got in a little rest. Venus in particular, as suggested above, better known, perhaps, as the mother of the kid with the pink Ypsilantis and the bow and arrow, was the original Miss Fix-it and it was seldom that a story got through to a finish without her putting her dainty pink foot in it somewhere.

But it is impossible to blame Venus for what happened on the day after Rose O'Callan's party, unless, as might be urged by those who know her best, Rose herself is a modern replica of the symmetrical goddess. At any rate, it is an open question whether Rose did anything deliberately, knowing whither her actions would tend.

Max rose shortly before noon, still stimulated by his resolution of the night before. He searched himself thoroughly for traces of fatigue. There were none. His new-found capacity for going without sleep was wonderful. Certainly the buoyancy of youth was his. He whistled as he bathed. Outdoors the sky was overcast, but no matter, he was young and Dorrie was doubtless waiting for him to get up.

Max dressed carefully. A man must look well to the woman he is going to make his wife. A cheerful cravat is certainly not too much to ask of a lover even before breakfast.

Quite satisfied with his personal appearance, Max threw open his door theatrically and stepped out into the living room.

His expectant pose was wasted. Dorrie was not there. The lazy baggage was still asleep.

Max went to her door and rapped on it. What right had she to slumber on the day of days? He rapped again, more peremptorily.

There was no sleepy response.

"Dorrie, wake up," he called and added to himself, "I want to tell you I love you."

But there was no answer either to his spoken or unspoken words.

He turned the knob and entered. From the fact that the shades were up he knew that she was not asleep. No, she was not in bed. Possibly she had gone out.

He started to summon a servant to ask about it, when a sudden thought struck him. He looked at his watch. It was twelve-thirty. Little Dick's boat to sail at one. Of course she had gone to see him off. Max sighed. This leavetaking was long-drawn-out business. Thank heaven it was nearly over and Dorrie would soon be speeding on her way back to him.

Slightly irritated, Max sat down to a solitary breakfast. Doubtless Dorrie

had already eaten hers somewhere with Little Dick.

Midway of the meal a sudden disquieting thought struck Max and he left the table abruptly to disprove his suspicion. He went once more to Dorrie's room and this time strode to the closet and opened it. The hooks were empty. It was as bare as Mother Hubbard's well-known cupboard. He pulled out the drawers of the dresser and chiffonier. Nothing there but the drawer pads.

Acting almost automatically, scarce knowing what he did or why he did it, Max dashed through his apartment, grabbing a hat as he went, and sought the street.

He had walked several blocks before an empty taxi overhauled him. Max jumped in and directed the driver to go to the United Mail Company's docks. Possibly the boat had been detained. What he would do if it had was all very vague in Max's mind, still it seemed his duty to go there and do something.

The necessity for action was obviated by the fact that when Max arrived the South American steamer was already out in the harbor beyond the reach of anything but the wireless. And on it drawing farther and farther away from him was the youth of Max Trelawney.

Suddenly he was very tired. All the verve was gone out of him. The fatigue that he had out-distanced now overtook him with redoubled power and pulled him down. If he could have looked in a mirror he felt sure that his face would be wrinkled and his hair grey. He laughed shortly. What a fool a man of his age was to think that he was young!

He sat down heavily on a packing-box.

"Shall I wait for you, sir?" asked the taxi-driver, whom he had forgotten to pay.

"No. Wait, you can take me somewhere."

"Yes, sir."

Max tried to think where he wanted to go. Not home surely. He wasn't sure that he ever wanted to go there again. Not to the club, either, or to the office. Finally he gave the chauffeur Rose O'Callan's address. Out of all the city she was the only friendly person he could think of, the only one who would be apt to understand. Yes, Rose was the only one he wanted to see, her understanding smile and sympathetic eyes might soothe the hurt a little.

"Miss Rose is not in," the domestic informed him when he rang the bell.

Where had she gone and when would she be back? The maid did not know, but she would tell her that Mr. Trelawney had called.

Confound it, why couldn't anything be right! To discover that he couldn't made Max want to see Rose more than ever. His irritation at her absence obliterated to a slight extent the pain of his major heartache.

Possibly Rose had gone to her brother's warehouse. He would go and find out. Anything was better than going back to that empty apartment.

It was beginning to rain, not heavily, but with an earnestness which was very depressing. Max shivered slightly and recollected for the first time in two weeks that he was subject to rheumatism.

The motor cab transported him drearily to the wholesale district, a sordid portion of the city devoted strictly to business without regard to appearances.

Mr. O'Callan was in.

"Glad to see you," he greeted automatically poking a black cigar at his visitor.

"Is your sister here?" It was a foolish question. Max could see all of the office and it was ridiculous to suppose that she was flattened out under the sofa.

"No, Rose isn't here," her brother assured him. "I guess she went down to the dock to see the bride and groom off. Fine fellow, that nephew of yours, and I think he's going to make good. His wife is a little beauty, too. They

were in here this morning just after they were married, a swell-looking young couple if you should ask my opinion."

Something in Mr. O'Callan's remarks arrested Max's attention. Rose had gone to see the couple off. Therefore she must have known about the wedding.

"Your sister knew they were going to be married?" he questioned, speaking his thought out loud.

"She must have," said O'Callan reflectively. "She bet me five dollars a week ago that Dick wouldn't go down there without a wife. I don't know how she found out about it, because Dick didn't mention it himself until he brought his bride in this morning and asked for expenses for two."

There was no place left to go but home.

XI

On his table the first thing that met his eye was a letter addressed in the familiar handwriting of Dorrie. It was postmarked New York and had evidently been mailed previous to sailing.

"Dick came for me this morning," it read. "He said we couldn't live without each other and so I went with him, although I had said I wouldn't the night before. Please forgive both of us. I know you will if you'll only remember how it was when you were young yourself. I love you.

"Dorrie."

"When you were young yourself." Why, that had been only that morning. The irony of his mistake about himself and the way Dorrie had regarded him was an especially humiliating pill to swallow.

The deep desolation of his surroundings sat on his soul like a brooding vulture. His apartment was as empty as a haunted house. The rain pattered on the windows and it was dark. Max irritably ordered that a fire be built, but its cheerful crackle failed to find an answer in his heart. He roved the rooms like a restless wraith, but they were strange to him and glaringly vacant like the eye-sockets in a skull. Especially so was Dorrie's room. Over the foot of the bed should have been a carelessly flung dress, on the dresser a clutter of knickknacks ought to have been untidily scattered and the corner of the room ached for a pair of slippers hastily kicked off during Dorrie's latest hasty change of costume.

He couldn't stand it. The rest of his life alone in that or some other apartment was an unbearable prospect.

"Ting-a-ling-a-ling." The telephone rasped on his frazzled nerves.

"Hello," he answered, wondering who in all the God-forsaken world was annoying him with something petty on this occasion.

"You needn't be cross. This is Rose."

It certainly was. There was no mistaking the liquid vigor of her voice.

"I've just discovered that you've been chasing me all over town. I'm sorry I was out. Did you want me?"

"Why—no—that is, yes."

"Which?"

Max looked unhappily around his empty rooms, looked for courage to meet his troubles alone and failed to find it.

"Yes," he answered.

"I'll be right over."

The telephone at the other end of the line was hung up hastily.

He looked at the clock on the mantel. It was four. But the rain and clouds outside made it quite dark. The shafts of light from the fire played expectantly on the chairs. They were lonesome but hopeful. The rain came in gusts against the windows.

Max sat for a while wondering if he ought not to telephone Rose not to come. Finally he did call up her home and ask for her. He discovered with relief that she had left.

It was four-thirty. The rain swished cosily on the glass. The firelight gained shifting brilliance as the night crept in closer outside.

She ought to be there soon, in ten minutes at the outside.

XII

BUT she wasn't. At a quarter of five she had not arrived and Max paced restlessly up and down the floor. He pictured her coming in the door, tall, full figured, with a fine dampness from the outdoor air on her cool cheek. How should he meet her? What would she say?

It was ten minutes of five. Max strolled to the sideboard in the dining room and poured himself a drink of wine from an almost unused decanter. It sent a pleasant glow through his system, but it failed to calm his nervous expectancy.

At five minutes of five he began to fear that some terrible accident had occurred. It would someway be in keeping with the way life was treating him that day. He would wait five minutes more and then he would start out in the rain to traverse the space between her home and his. He must find out what was keeping her.

He forced himself to sit quietly before the fire, but the measured ticking of the clock pounded on his nerves. Two minutes more and he would start out. The night closed in with a howling rattle of water dashed against the panes. It was quite dark outside.

Slowly the clock struck, a single deep boom, then another, and another until the fifth echoed lonesomely all by itself.

Max arose from his chair and started for the hall. Midway across the room he stopped and stood transfixed.

In the breathless silence he heard what is the most terrifying or the most interesting sound in the world,—the rattle of a latch-key in the lock of your front door.

A SHORT STORY

By Thomas Dreier

SHE was laughing Thursday evening when he met her for the first time. At the breakfast table in his apartment Friday morning he saw a single tear roll down her cheek.

MARRIAGE is the first foolish act that we commit after we become sensible.

A MAN'S idea of Hell: "All dressed up, drunk, and no place to go."

THE BEAUTIFUL ONE

By John Reed Scott

THE Delafields were riding for a fall. There were those who had predicted it from the moment the engagement was announced, and more who predicted it as time went on. Presently it was conceded by all their friends and acquaintances that the only end possible was the divorce-court—or death. As both were singularly vigorous, the divorce-court had the odds.

Temperamentally, socially, and financially, the Delafields were utterly unsuited to each other.

Both were the rapid-fire, hair-trigger sort, nervous as cats; ready to scrap at the drop of a hat, and scrapping before the hat dropped. Starting over absolutely nothing, they could run the gamut in thirty seconds, and hand each other an assortment of dazzling compliments such as an ordinary individual would not recover from in a week. Then, like enough, they would turn back and repeat; the number of repeats depending entirely on the number of encores given—and the length of time at their disposal.

All of which shows the folly of mating two of a kind—it goes in poker, but it is a rank failure in matrimony. The placid and the nervous travel much better in double-harness.

Socially there was an equality. She belonged now—because she had the coin and had married a Delafield. Hitherto her parents and she had been on the ragged-edge—the milled-edge would be better. They shot up when the engagement was announced; they nestled in the fold when the organ rolled the Recessional.

All of which later furnished food for reflection—and inference—when the compliments were being exchanged.

Finances, however, were the greatest bunker to happiness. Delafield was poor, horribly poor; Kathleen was rich, enormously rich. And Delafield had no occupation nor actual profession. He was a lawyer, whose only clients were a pocket full of unpaid bills—or rather pockets full of overdue bills—and a fine collection of golf cups.

Delafield had needed a wife—or someone to finance him—and had traded his social position for her dollars. She had traded her dollars for his name, and what it meant for her and her children. He provided his children with a rich mother, and she provided her children with a Delafield for a father. It seemed a fair and proper exchange—and it was, for the children. For the parents, it was not, as has been observed, a glorious success—unless one regards a glorious failure as a success.

For the first few years Delafield kept himself pretty well in leash, and permitted Kathleen to do the exploding. Gradually, however, his restraint broke bounds and he detonated a few himself; which simply started Kathleen off again and with renewed strength. And Delafield, having detonated to his pleasement, was pleased to detonate some more—to his additional pleasement. And so the verbal rough-house started.

Then Kathleen referred casually to certain things her money had enabled him to do—and was still enabling. Whereupon, Delafield incidentally let her know that they had not been quite on the same social plane when he had graciously condescended to make her his wife.

It can readily be inferred that the result was scarcely allaying to either's hurt and sad feelings. And the breach widened noticeably.

It must be said for Delafield that he never began the quarrel; but thereafter, like a good fellow, he joined in the discussions *in re* personal merits and their incidentals.

There was this distinction, however, between the two: Delafield was too good-natured to treasure the disagreement; his idea was peace. Kathleen, on the other hand, never forgot; she sulked and bore spite. And the sulk and the spite grew with the strife; until finally Delafield spent much of his time away from home—and Kathleen.

Of course, in the interest of self-respect, and as a father with natural affections, he wanted to see his children and to be with them, and he let nothing stand in his way. They were Delafields, and he had not the slightest intention of permitting them to forget it and to revert to the maternal type.

And though he never intimated this phase of the matter when Kathleen and he were conferring encomiums on each other, yet she knew his purpose; and, at last, in a whirl of passion, it came out.

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed, "the children may be *ours,* but they are not Delafields!"

"I take it that you refer to their personal characteristics, and not to my share in their parentage," Delafield replied easily.

Then is when she hurled the telephone receiver—being the thing handiest—in his face. The cord caught the instrument before it reached him—which saved his face; for, remarkable as it may seem, her aim was accurate.

"Number!" Central was saying, as he retrieved the receiver.

"Mrs. Delafield wishes to speak to you," he answered, and passed the instrument across.

"You fool!" cried Kathleen—and flung out the room.

"Never mind, Central," smiled Delafield, and went off to his Club.

He had become hardened—case-hardened.

Mrs. Delafield was just finishing her breakfast the following morning when the butler brought her a card.

"Miss Chartiers!" she read. "Is she an agent, Swallow?"

"No, madame; she's a lady."

"Young and good looking?"

"Very good looking, madame."

"I supposed so. Well, I'll see her—but if she's an agent, Swallow, you will regret it. Show her into the living-room."

II

As Mrs. Delafield entered, a quietly dressed and slender figure was standing by a distant window—when the figure turned, Kathleen did not wonder at Swallow's letting her by. Good looking? She was simply ravishingly beautiful—Titian hair, a Grecian face, a peach-blow-and-marble complexion, soft blue eyes, a bow of a mouth, and the expression of an innocent young girl.

"How do you do, Mrs. Delafield," she said, and her voice was soft and clear as a silver bell. "You are *very* good to see me!"

And Mrs. Delafield fell for it instantly.

"It's a great pleasure to see you, Miss Chartiers," she responded cordially.

"And I shan't detain you a moment, if we cannot come to an understanding," Miss Chartiers went on—and smiled.

And Mrs. Delafield capitulated. So frank, fresh, and ingenuous a smile she had never seen.

"I am quite sure we will reach an understanding!" she smiled back; "though what that understanding is, I can't imagine—more than I'm quite sure it's something well worth while."

Which shows how complete was Mrs. Delafield's capitulation.

Miss Chartiers glanced around the room; then crossed to a chair close to Mrs. Delafield—and drew it still closer.

"You never can know when a servant is listening," she observed, "and this matter is best kept to ourselves."

"Come over here," Kathleen replied, and led the way to a sofa in a far corner.

Miss Chartiers followed—even her walk was captivating.

"Now," said Kathleen, "we can talk without the least danger of being overheard."

"You're exceedingly thoughtful, Mrs. Delafield," Miss Chartiers murmured; "and in return I shall come right to the point. Do you wish to be divorced from Mr. Delafield?"

"Do I wish to be divorced!" Kathleen gasped. "No, certainly not! What gave you any such idea?"

As a matter of fact, it was the very thing she did wish, and since last night was determined to obtain—but she was not prepared for an utter stranger to spring the subject so abruptly, and with such a business-like air.

"The circumstances of your marriage, with the incidents subsequent," Miss Chartiers answered. "You are rich. Mr. Delafield was poor, and still is poor. May I continue?"

Kathleen nodded weakly—she was quite too bewildered to speak.

"In such conditions, with their usual accompaniments, my dear Mrs. Delafield, the wife ordinarily welcomes an occasion for divorce. My experience and investigation show me that where feminine wealth marries male poverty, and the male does not exhibit a disposition to improve his bank account, the woman, in a few years, is very ready for a separation. She tires of financing the failure or the indolent. But she hesitates because of the difficulty attendant upon obtaining evidence, with the scandal of it all; or because, as is frequently the case, she has not an adequate cause. Do I make myself sufficiently plain?"

Again Kathleen nodded.

"Now my proposition, Mrs. Delafield, is this"—Miss Chartiers went on lowering her voice—and taking the other's hand in a confidentially intimate way. "For a sufficient consideration, I will supply the cause?"

"You!" cried Kathleen.

Miss Chartiers nodded briskly.

"I will engage to furnish you adequate proof within two weeks after the contract between us is closed!" she smiled. "Look at me critically if you doubt my qualifications for the task."

She turned full face to Kathleen—and waited a moment. Then she arose languidly, swept up her skirts, and walked slowly down the room and back.

"Don't you think I have the figure and the face and the manners to—fascinate a man?" she asked.

"Yes, I do!" Kathleen admitted.

"They have never yet failed to win—and I'll venture that Mr. Delafield isn't different from the rest."

For just an instant Kathleen bristled—then she smoothed her brow. She had determined on the divorce; the end justified the means, and here was a devil-given opportunity. Why let it slip?

"How would you proceed, Miss Chartiers?" she asked.

"By coming here as your guest. It's easier so, and much quicker—as well as safer, and more satisfactory. Also it prevents the scandal that must ensue when done elsewhere. With temptation always at hand, the doing is but a matter of a little time—if the woman's willing. Believe me, Mrs. Delafield, I have been through it sufficiently often to know."

Kathleen gave one look into those sweetly-innocent-doll-baby-blue e y e s, recalled the walk across the room with raised skirts—and succumbed. If that fascinating face, and those ravishingly suggestive ankles could not stir Louis Delafield to submission—

"I'll accept, Miss Chartiers, if your terms are within reason," she replied.

"My terms are what you can afford to pay," Miss Chartiers answered.

"You put it in an unusual way," Kathleen returned.

"You know your circumstances, Mrs. Delafield," the other smiled; "and you alone are familiar with the provocation and the attendant causes; when they be-

gan, how much they have become intensified—and particularly how much you wish to be free. You see, you are much better able to judge what my services will be worth in money to you. Therefore, in the first instance, you must fix the figure—if it is too low, I'll frankly say so."

"You have a minimum then?" Kathleen asked—she was not wholly wanting in business acumen.

"I have a minimum—but no maximum!" was the laughing reply.

And Kathleen laughed too. Miss Chartiers had a wonderfully winning way even with a woman. From which it may be inferred what that aforesaid way would be with a man. Then Kathleen's pretty brows puckered in thought—the market was in the dumps; stocks were depressed; dividends were threatened, even passed; her income was not what it was a year ago; and her capital was much reduced in available value. To be sure, she wanted to be rid of Delafield, and with the least possible notoriety; but she also wanted it to be at the least possible cost. Yet, somehow—with a quick glance at the lovely face beside her—somehow, she hesitated to offer a moderate amount; if she did, something told her that not only would the offer be rejected but she would forfeit her superior position. One may not haggle over some things—and a woman in her position, divorced-to-be as well as social, could not afford it. So she spoke:

"How would—ten thousand dollars do?"

"You're over the minimum. Ten thousand dollars is satisfactory."

"To be paid when you have made good," Kathleen amended.

"Not exactly!" Miss Chartiers smiled. "Twenty-five hundred when I come here; another twenty-five hundred when I convince you that it is about to happen; and the balance when—it has happened."

Mrs. Delafield looked at the tip of her pump and considered. . . . It might be five thousand dollars for nothing—and maybe that was what Miss Chartiers was counting on. It was a neat sum to risk; yet such were Miss Chartier's terms—she was not obtainable otherwise and she was fascinatingly lovely enough to put the thing over with ease. The divorce was decided on, and—

"Do you doubt my ability to handle the matter?" Miss Chartiers inquired.

"Not in the least," Kathleen answered; "but will you go the whole way?"

"You think I may go only to the five thousand dollar point, and then disappear?"

"It might be done?"

"It might be done, yes, and easily done—but I am not of that sort. Moreover, when the five thousand dollar point is attained, my work is practically over—the rest is but a mere detail to be closed at my pleasure."

She said it as naturally as though asking for another cup of tea—and she smiled pleasantly while saying it.

Kathleen, marvelling the more, was convinced and persuaded.

"It's a bargain!" she decided. "I'll pay the price according to your terms, if you play the part according to agreement."

"I'll play it, Mrs. Delafield, never fear," the Beautiful-One declared. "When shall I flutter down upon you?"

"As quickly as you wish!"

"It's entirely up to you; I can come at once. With a client of your age, I'm generally an old school friend, whom you have asked to visit you. Sometimes one desires time for preparation."

"I don't require any preparation. You may come this afternoon—in fact, you may remain now, if you will, and telephone for your luggage."

"That is delightful!" said Miss Chartiers. "We can fix up our stories at our leisure, and be prepared for Mr. Delafield when he returns home this evening. You went to Dobbs Ferry, I believe, and finished off at Mrs. Partridge's in New York?"

"I did," admitted Kathleen; "how did you—"

"It is my business to be informed on

such essential matters!" Miss Chartiers smiled.

"Are you also informed as to Mr. Delafield's and my—differences?"

"Somewhat. Otherwise I should not have volunteered my services."

"I fancy the information was not difficult to obtain?"

"Not especially."

"Hump!" commented Kathleen.

"Your prominence socially, you see, renders you and Mr. Delafield peculiarly subject to gossip," Miss Chartiers explained.

"And our habit of disagreeing in public, as well as in private," Kathleen added, "renders us an easy mark—for which we have only ourselves to blame; the respective liability of Mr. Delafield and me being immaterial to solicitous friends. However, moralizing is little profit. The divorce is the thing."

"And to that end, you must play your part, Mrs. Delafield. We shall have to appear extraordinarily glad to be together after such long separation—and so on. We must call each other by our first names—mine, by the way, is Mildred; yours, I believe, is Kathleen. Everything depends on Mr. Delafield not having his suspicions aroused."

"Mr. Delafield hasn't suspicions," Kathleen remarked. "He is too indolent to make even the exertion necessary to arouse them."

"Promising material!" Miss Chartiers answered.

"I've never known him to look at a woman," said Kathleen; "but if anyone can stir him to life, it's you—with that face and figure. Don't be afraid to let him see those trim ankles, and so on, Mildred."

"You may depend, Kathleen, that I shall not hide my good points!" Miss Chartiers laughed.

III

Delafield came home just in time to dress for dinner. It is quite probable he would not have come home before midnight, but for the fact that it was raining too heavily to play golf, and the usual auction crowd, for some inexplicable reason, was not on hand.

As he mounted the stairs a slender young woman in evening dress, skirts gathered high, passed leisurely down the hallway and into one of the guest-rooms.

"Hello!" he whistled. "Kathleen at last seems to have found one that really is worth looking at—though it's a royal to a bob that the mother is along. Well, even from the brief glance granted, she looks pretty good to me."

But Delafield was wise—he did not go into his wife's boudoir and inquire casually as to the unknown. He had learned long ago to express neither admiration nor dislike for, nor interest in, a female guest. It only congested the marital atmosphere—and the congestion was quite sufficient when things were normal. After one or two early experiences, he would not have commented if he had met the Venus de Milo alive—and in his hallway. What is more, he would have passed her by on the other side.

So he dressed for dinner, and went down to the living-room, knowing that all things come to him who does not get nervous.

He heard his wife's voice; and then a strange one; and he paused for more—of the matter: it was the softest, most mellifluous voice he ever had heard. But his wife spoke again—and as he had heard *her* voice often, and with neither the softness nor the mellifluence, he did not linger.

"Louis," said she, as he sauntered into the room, "I want you to know an old friend, whom I haven't seen for years—Mildred Chartiers. I've persuaded her to come to me for a little visit."

The lady with the lovely face and slender ankles held out her hand and smiled up at Delafield entrancingly; and Delafield straightaway bent over the hand with all the courtly grace he could assume so well when he wished.

"Miss Chartiers, I'm delighted!" he said most cordially, but with dignified reserve.

All through dinner, Miss Chartiers sparkled; and Delafield watched her, and joined discreetly in the sparkle—when his wife was sparkling too. Once or twice, indeed, stirred by Miss Chartiers' beauty and magnetism, he caught himself breaking over the line of injudicious indifference, yet his wife did not glare at him; in truth, she did not seem even to notice his momentary enthusiasm.

Which made Delafield wonder. It was not her usual way.

When he came upstairs, there was light in his wife's dressing-room, and he knocked and entered.

"Kathleen," he said, "who is Miss Chartiers—I never heard you mention her?"

"It's altogether likely," Kathleen drawled. "You rarely ever listen to anything I say to you."

"Oh, very well!" said Delafield indifferently, and went on to his room.

Mrs. Delafield was acting more naturally.

Kathleen never came down for breakfast; she had it either in bed or in her boudoir. Judge Delafield's surprise, when he walked into the breakfast-room and found Miss Chartiers there—reading the papers and waiting for him.

"You don't object, do you, Mr. Delafield, to my company at this particularly unsociable meal?" she inquired naïvely.

"I most assuredly do not!" Delafield beamed—there was no occasion to hide his pleasure.

She was quite as alluring in a simple morning-gown as she was last night in evening-dress; and he noted that she was not afraid to let the sun fall upon her face. Her complexion was real. She evidenced it by this disregard of the light; and he was convinced of it by careful and frequent inspection. So careful and so frequent that at last she refused longer to ignore.

"It's real, Mr. Delafield!" she smiled. "I neither rouge nor powder."

"What need for either with such a marvelous coloring?" he replied. "In fact, my dear Miss Chartiers, what need for anything more than you have."

"Careful!" she laughed.

"And what need for care—since you're not offended?"

"Perhaps, sir, I am offended."

"Perhaps!" he smiled.

"Where is Mrs. Delafield?" she asked, as the butler returned to the room.

"Recovering from the trials of yesterday!" he replied. "There is always a yesterday, you know."

"As well as a to-day and a to-morrow!" and shot him a quick look from her baby-blue eyes.

And Delafield, somewhat mystified, but very prudent, shot back a look—and cut the steak.

And she, not wishing to rush things, and having sized up the situation—and Delafield—was content to wait; knowing that the waiting would not be long, and being confident of her own powers.

"Well, how are you progressing?" Mrs. Delafield asked, when somewhat later Miss Chartiers joined her in her boudoir.

"We're getting on!" the latter smiled, taking a tiny gold-tipped cigarette from her case and lighting it with the touch of an adept. "His reserve isn't impenetrable; and with the proper provocation and opportunity he'll open up very quickly." She stretched her lithe length in a deep chair, and crossed her knees with fetching abandon. "At all events, I'm not in the least discouraged."

"There is little need," Kathleen remarked, "so long as you have your present—figure."

Miss Chartiers held far up a narrow, high-instepped foot and tapering ankle and viewed them critically.

"They *do* seem to take with the men," she admitted.

"Much to your surprise!" Kathleen inflected.

"They are of my stock in trade," Mildred replied.

"And it's no trouble to show goods!" Kathleen flashed.

"None whatever, when you're in the business."

"How in the world did you start it?" Mrs. Delafield asked.

"You mean the business of being a professional co-respondent?"

"Yes—you are too—"

"No, I'm not!" Miss Chartiers laughed. "Can you tell me anything else at which I could make ten thousand dollars in a few weeks—maybe days?"

"But you pay the price!" exclaimed Kathleen.

"Not necessarily. The contract obligates me to furnish proof—and proof may be inferred from circumstances."

"Humph!" Kathleen commented. "A distinction without any moral difference."

"Granted!" Mildred admitted. "Yet with an experience of some years I have never found it necessary to pay the last price—and, believe it or not as you wish, I've never done so."

"What are you made of?" said Kathleen incredulously.

Miss Chartiers shrugged—and blew a cloud of smoke ceilingward.

"Flesh and blood—as you see," she replied; "but none of the men have appealed to me; they're simply 'cases,' as they say in the hospitals. If I were to get interested, I should probably have another story."

"Does Mr. Delafield appeal to you?" Kathleen inquired, a shade of snap in her voice.

"Not in the least, I assure you!" Mildred smiled. "He's just a 'case.' When a 'case' ceases to be a 'case,' and my affections become involved, that minute I'll throw up the contract. It's because I can handle men impersonally that I've been so successful—and success, you know, is what we have in view."

"To be sure!" Kathleen replied.

"If we were to go to the theatre tonight," suggested Miss Chartiers, "and you, at the last moment, acquired a headache, or something of the sort, and permitted Mr. Delafield and me to go on without you, I fancy I can promise results. The ride down and back in the limousine should be very productive."

Mrs. Delafield nodded—and reached for her telephone.

"This ride together should expedite matters very materially," Mildred continued, tossing away her cigarette and slowly tapping another on the back of her hand. "Mr. Delafield seems a very fair prospect."

Whereat Kathleen hated the fascinating beauty furiously—and the fascinating beauty knew it perfectly well, and was mildly amused. It was ever so: the wife *wanted* the divorce, but she could have strangled the one whom she employed to furnish her the cause.

Queer philosophy—yet it is the way of the sex!

IV

"TICKETS!" smiled Delafield, hanging up the receiver. "Sure, I'll get them—the Beautiful-One will be along. She certainly is the most fascinating thing I've ever seen. H-u-m! I can't imagine what Kathleen meant by turning her loose in the house—unless she thinks that I'm too indifferent even to notice." And he shut one eye, and smiled.

"I got the tickets you wanted," he remarked to Kathleen, when he came home. "I'm not much on the theater, but I suppose you won't go alone."

"I'm afraid you and Mildred will have to go without *me*," Kathleen replied. "I've got a blinding headache, and I'm going to bed immediately after dinner."

"Does Miss Chartiers want to go?" he asked, apparently in great disgust.

"Perfectly crazy about it."

"Humph! Would one miss make her any crazier?"

"Possibly not—but it would make you just that much more an ungracious host."

"I'm glad to know I'm termed a host on some occasions."

"It *is* queer!" Kathleen retorted. "Dinner at seven, so you can get there before the curtain."

"Damn!" said Delafield.

He went back to his dressing—wearing a sly smile. It was easy!

Miss Chartiers came down to dinner wearing a green and gold gown that was a dream of beauty—and simplicity. It was diaphanous enough in a strong light to more than suggest, where its total absence did not actually reveal. The mere idea of riding beside her, and of sitting next her in the theater, made Delafield's pulses quicken.

"Maybe Mr. Delafield doesn't want to be bothered with me," said the Beautiful-One—when Kathleen 'broke' the news that she had a blinding headache, and was going to bed instead of to the theater.

"Louis will be only too glad to take you, Mildred," Kathleen assured her.

"Will you?" Mildred asked, turning her baby-blue eyes on Delafield's face in the most bewitchingly innocent way.

"Of course, I will—if you'll go with *me*," he answered, dignifiedly gracious.

"If I'll go with you, Mr. Delafield!" she trilled.

And she was still trilling deliciously when Delafield put her in the car and they shot away.

Of the ride down, and the play, Delafield never had any distinct recollection—save of the woman beside him. She was the ride and the play. But of the ride back he had the most vivid remembrance—particularly when she dropped her gloves, and he, stooping for them, found an enticing ankle right to his hand.

For an instant he looked. . . . Then, venturing a caress, was met with the laughing inquiry—while she gently disengaged his fingers:

"Why did you do that, Mr. Delafield?"

"Because I couldn't resist," he replied.

"Did you try to resist?"

"Frankly, I didn't."

"Better try in future," she advised—"or I'll have to see that Kathleen is always along."

"You're the most fascinating woman on earth!" he cried—and caught her hand.

"And what are you?" she smiled.

"I'm a poor unfortunate who's crazy about you!" and his arm found her slender waist.

"Don't!" she protested—and let the arm remain.

Yet she would not permit him more than her hand and waist, until the car turned in at the house; then she let him take her lips. Thereafter she held him a panting prisoner to do her will. She clinched the matter, as they went up the steps, by pressing his hand and whispering:

"Am I very wicked, dear?"

Delafield went into the library and tried to read. Mildred, on the way to her room, found Kathleen's door open—and Kathleen waiting.

"Well?" the latter purred. "How goes it?"

"Beautifully!" Mildred replied. "We're getting on rapidly. He squeezed my ankle—

Kathleen gave an angry gasp!

"Beg pardon?" Mildred inflected.

"I didn't speak," said Kathleen.

"Mr. Delafield squeezed my ankle," Mildred resumed. "Then he took my hand, and put his arm around my waist; and, just as we reached the drive, he kissed me. To-morrow is very promising for the—cause, Mrs. Delafield."

Kathleen's laces rose and fell spasmodically—but Mildred never appeared to notice.

"Mr. Delafield is unusually responsive," she continued; "so with the proper environment and opportunity, I fancy you may look for the dénouement at any moment."

"It can't come too quickly for me!" Kathleen gritted. "I want to be rid of the beast."

Miss Chartiers smiled sympathetically.

"Do you think I have earned the second twenty-five hundred dollars?" she asked.

"I do," said Kathleen. "But I should—should like to see him—kiss you. Wait; he's in the library. The interior

of the room is reflected in the large glass-panel in the hall. Some chance takes you to the library, and—you understand?"

"I understand," said the Beautiful-One; and her cloak still about her shoulders, she went slowly down the stairs—leaving Kathleen on the landing. . . .

When she returned, Kathleen was sitting at her dressing-table—motionless.

"You have earned your money, Miss Chartiers," she said coolly, yet apathetically. "Much *more* than earned it, indeed." Then suddenly she brought her clenched hand down on the dressing-table with all her force. *"The beast! The beast!"* she cried.

When Miss Chartiers entered the breakfast-room the following morning, Delafield came forward with dignified courtesy to greet her—the butler was present. Waving the man aside, he himself drew out her chair; and—the butler having momentarily withdrawn—he bent and kissed her on the cheek.

"Soneone may see you, dear!" she protested; "better wait until there is no danger."

"I'll wait *now,*" he replied—"if it's not too long."

She gave him an alluring smile—and nodded.

She would land him to-day—also, five thousand additional dollars.

V

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Delafield at home?" inquired a hearty man's voice in the hall.

"Yes, Mr. Maddox," the servant replied. "Mr. Delafield is in the breakfast-room now."

"Damn!" muttered Delafield—and looked at Miss Chartiers.

"Hello, Delafield, old man!" the hearty voice exclaimed, still from the hall. "I'm as hungry as a hobo. I'm mighty—" His eyes fell upon Miss Chartiers, and he stopped. "Oh, I beg your pardon! I didn't know—"

"What didn't you know, Fred?" Delafield asked, extending his hand. "Don't be backward. Miss Chartiers, let me present my brother-in-law, Mr. Maddox."

"So this is Kathleen's wonderful brother!" smiled Miss Chartiers, giving Maddox her hand.

"I've a quarrel to pick with Kathleen," Maddox replied, still holding the tapering fingers. "How does it happen that I have never met you?"

"You'll have to ask your sister," Mildred answered.

She had appraised the big, good-looking chap in a glance. Clean-shaven, lean-jawed, full nose, blue-eyes, hair close-cropped, age possibly thirty-five, frank and open-handed—and an adorer of pretty women. Here was something well worth her while.

"Sit down, man!" Delafield laughed. "Miss Chartiers won't vanish when you drop her hand."

"At least not until I've had breakfast!" Mildred rejoined.

"Where's Kathleen?" Maddox asked—all the while looking into Miss Chartiers' eyes.

"Upstairs, you idiot!" Delafield responded. "Go and speak to her, if you want—she's not asleep."

"I'll be back in a moment. Swallow, grape-fruit, please,"—and, with another adoring glance at the Beautiful-One, he went.

"Hello, Kath!" he greeted, with a wave of the hand. "Only wanted to say howdy. Just got in, and came right up here for breakfast. Who's the houri eating oranges with Delafield?"

"I suppose you mean Miss Chartiers," his sister said unenthusiastically.

"Sure thing, Kath. Better not leave her too much with old Delafield—he may be hard to stir, sister mine, but take it from me she's the swishest bit of beauty-show that trips in my green memory. Why did you keep her hid from me so long? Lord, what a face and figure she has!"

Kathleen suddenly felt weak, decidedly weak. She was caught—and by her own act.

It was, of course, impossible to tell

Fred the truth. Man-like he would warn Delafield—and she would be out the divorce, and her five thousand dollars besides. Moreover, Delafield would then have the upper hand; and she could never endure that—nor his scorn and sarcasm. No, she must play the game to the end—and the end, thank Heaven, would not be delayed much longer.

"Mildred is very good-looking," she returned languidly. "But don't you go making love to her, Fred—that's her particular *penchant*. If I'd had the remotest idea you'd be here, I should not have asked her to visit me."

"Good for you!" Maddox laughed. "Now I'll go down and intrude on Louis' monopoly. It's a shame to waste such loveliness on an old married man—even when he is as steady as Delafield. And say, dear, you can find me whenever you want me—in the neighborhood of Miss Chartiers."

Meanwhile, the Beautiful-One had given Delafield a smile-that-promised-much—and remarked.

"Mr. Maddox is exactly as Kathleen described him."

"Fred's a fine chap," Delafield admitted. "Breezy and honest as he's handsome. He's just back from Japan."

"Is he married?" casually inquired the Beautiful-One.

"Married! Not he. I can't fancy Fred tying up to one when the woods are full of the many—and he's got gobs of money to spend on them."

"I don't care for such big men," she shrugged, burying her teeth in a roll—and granting Delafield another smile-that-promised-much.

And Delafield—the butler being again conveniently absent from the room—sprang around the table and kissed her on the lips; which he found raised to meet his. Moreover, the lips returned the kiss right joyously.

"You're fearfully rash, Louis!" she murmured.

"Who wouldn't be rash with you?" he whispered. "When I get you alone, dearest, I'll cover you with kisses."

"When will that be?" she whispered.

"As soon as you make it," he replied.

She laughed, and her foot strayed over and nestled close to his.

"This evening, in the library," she said low. "Or, better still, before dinner, in my room—if you can manage it."

"I'll manage it!" said he. "I'd come th—"

"Then go away immediately after breakfast, and don't return until six," she cautioned. "It's better so, believe me. Kathleen is—" The butler's entrance cut short the rest. "Don't wait for me, Mr. Delafield," she remarked. "Breakfast is not a sociable meal—it's a rush for you men. I'll excuse you."

"Thanks!" he returned, understandingly. "I've an appointment at nine-thirty. *A bientôt!*"

With a nod he departed—but glancing back as he passed the doorway, a perfectly bewildering smile struck him full in the face.

"Gee!" he exclaimed vividly.

On the stairway, he passed Maddox.

"Off?" asked the latter.

"Yes," said Delafield. "See you at dinner, Fred?"

"Sure thing!" Maddox replied. "Quite a few dinners, indeed—also breakfasts!"—and with a wink he passed on.

"Damn!" thought Delafield; and while he thought it, yet, had he shouted, it could not have been with more feeling.

Maddox joined Miss Chartiers in the breakfast-room; and he stayed with her there, and in the library, and in the living-room, until luncheon—while Kathleen fumed, and snapped, and paced the boudoir floor—and made her maid's life doubly miserable.

Finally she sent for Miss Chartiers.

"I wish you would cease making a fool of my brother!" she stormed. "He thinks you're my friend and a proper woman—and I dare not tell him the truth, as you very well know."

"My dear Kathleen, I'm only playing the part!" the Beautiful-One smiled. "In a few days, possibly even to-day, the contract will be completed

—and Mr. Delafield in your power."

"Then stay away from my brother!" Kathleen enjoined.

"I'm not seeking Mr. Maddox," Miss Chartiers protested.

"No, he's seeking you—with your connivance. You're working your devilish beauty on him—and maybe your ankles."

"I'm your old school friend—so we must not quarrel, Kathleen!" the Beautiful-One laughed. "I'll promise to do nothing—"

"You don't need to *do* anything!" Kathleen exclaimed. "Then men do it all, if you only give them half a show. They're all alike; and they're all imbeciles. They're clay in your hands; I admit it, and *you* know it. You've got Delafield going so fast he's dizzy; and you'll have my brother crazy about you—if he's not so already—before the afternoon is over. My God, woman, be satisfied with one man in a household!"

"Do you wish to rescind the contract, Mrs. Delafield?" Miss Chartiers inquired gently.

"Certainly not! I wish you to complete the contract as quickly as possible. But I do demand that you avoid Mr. Maddox."

"I'm sorry; I have promised to motor with him after luncheon."

"Get out of it—headache, tired, anything!"

"And make him only the more anxious?"

"Oh, you've already got him to the anxious point, have you?" Kathleen cried. "Fred's a fool, not to see through you."

"Mr. Maddox is partial to a pretty face and an—an ankle!" Miss Chartiers laughed. "However, I shall furnish you the proof this evening, if my plan goes through—and under the circumstances I think it wouldn't be well to disturb the innocent ride with your brother. After to-night, you know, I shall not be here."

"You are sure you can put it over to-night?" Kathleen questioned.

"Before dinner, if it goes as I anticipate," the Beautiful-One replied. "Mr. Delafield will come to my room; you will wait several minutes — and then surprise us. Understand?"

Kathleen's eyes burned like a woman-eating tigress'—but she nodded.

Miss Chartiers smiled — and went out.

At luncheon Kathleen and her brother did the talking—by Kathleen's maneuvering. And Miss Chartiers was content to listen and smile—well aware that she did both fascinatingly well, and that she was not losing in the doing.

Kathleen was nervous and overwrought; her temper, never much at the best, was exceedingly gusty, and was repressed with evident difficulty. As against her, Miss Chartiers' poise and amiability were in appealing contrast—to Maddox.

"What is the matter with Kathleen?" he remarked, when the big roadster was purring down the street, headed for the open country. "I've never seen her in such a waspish humor. You couldn't please her with a diamond rattle."

"I didn't notice it especially," returned Miss Chartiers. "She seemed a bit upset by something; but we women, you know, are easily upset."

"You're not!" he declared, leaning close. "And while we're on the subject, little girl, I want to confide confidentially to your inmost ear that you're the pick of the bunch and the dazzler of them all."

"Oh, Mr. Maddox!" she murmured —and blushed exquisitely.

"Which means, in ordinary language —the sort that is used in polite society," he went on, changing his manner with his words, "that you're perfectly adorable."

"I like that much better!" she laughed. "It's more in accord with Kathleen's brother — about whom," with a sly glance from those blue eyes, "I used to hear so much."

"I wish I had heard about you!" he exclaimed. "Kathleen never even peeped, Miss Chartiers. Like every sis-

ter, she's jealous of her only brother, and wants to prevent him from marrying—and she knew enough to keep you hidden."

Very deliberately his hand came down from the steering-wheel, and his long, slender fingers closed over hers with the air of protection and confidence that every woman—be she good or bad—simply worships.

"Little girl," he whispered, "we've known each other for only a few hours, but it's enough for me. Will you marry me, Mildred?"

She gave a tremulous little gasp—that ended in a sigh.

"I can't, dear," she replied. "I'm promised—and—" snuggling closer—"I want you. I've wanted you from the moment I saw you."

The car swerved just a trifle, as he flung his arm around her and kissed the fascinating mouth.

"We'll fix that, sweetheart!" he said heartily. "You're sure you love me?"

"Sure—perfectly sure!" she murmured. "I've loved you for years—ever since Kathleen and I were in school together—and she talked of you, Fred. I didn't realize it until I heard your voice in the hall, and saw you in the doorway—and—then—I knew. But I'm promised, dear, and—"

"Everything is fair in love and war, little woman," he replied masterly. "The chap that has your promise is a good sport; *you* couldn't care for anyone that isn't; and he'll understand—and be a thoroughbred."

She stole a quick look up at him.

"What do you mean, dear?" she whispered.

"I mean that we are on our way for a license and a—"

"No, no!" she cried. "What will Kathleen say!"

"We won't give her a chance to say it until later, much later. We're going to Egypt—and around the world. We've started now."

They had entered a wood—the road behind and before was deserted. He threw into neutral, and applied the brakes sharply—very sharply.

Then he took the Beautiful-One in his arms and held her close.

VI

Delafield, restless all day, came home before six o'clock.

"Mrs. Delafield is in her rooms, sir," the butler informed him. "Miss Chartiers and Mr. Maddox went off in the roadster immediately after luncheon, sir, and have not yet returned."

Delafield nodded and went on upstairs. His rooms were just across the corridor from Miss Chartiers'—which was most convenient for the matter in hand.

Letting his door ajar, he flung himself in an easy chair and watched impatiently for her return—very impatiently.

Why in the devil should that long-legged fool of a brother-in-law happen in just at this time? Why did he not come to-morrow, or next week, or next year? He was fond of Maddox—but at this particular exigency he was colossally in the way.

Half after six!—a quarter to seven!—seven? Still Miss Chartiers had not come.

The street lamps were lighted—the house was aglow—night was falling—and still she was absent.

Damn Maddox!

He got up and went into the hall. Kathleen's door was partially open; he crossed over and looked in.

Her maid was arranging her hair, and he thought he had never seen so calmly chill a look on her calmly cold face. It made him shiver—upon whom her chill looks were as the rays of a tropic sun.

"If you are looking for Miss Chartiers," she remarked frigidly, seeing him in the glass, "she has not yet returned."

He shrugged his shoulders and swung away. But he was puzzled, and somewhat perturbed. Why had she said it?—what did she know, or suspect? There would be hell to pay, if she but imagined—

A ring at the front caused him to pause! It was a messenger boy with a letter. The butler receipted for it and disappeared—to reappear from the servants' stairway.

"For whom?" Delafield asked sharply.

"Mrs. Delafield, sir," the man responded.

Delafield waved him on, and went slowly back to his room. It would not be *before* dinner, *now*—and he began to dress.

A scream from his wife's room brought him slowly to his door. A terrified maid met him on the threshold.

"Come quickly!" she gasped. "Mrs. Delafield's fainted."

Delafield carried his wife to the bed and rang for assistance. Then he noticed the letter at the spot where she had fallen. He picked it up. It was in Fred's handwriting:

Dear Kath—

Mildred and I were married this afternoon and are off for Egypt. Our love to you and Louis.

As ever, Fred.

"My word!" Delafield ejaculated.

Then he turned slowly and regarded Kathleen.

"It's sort of curious about that faint," he reflected; "very, *very* curious indeed. I wonder—I wonder if Kathleen has caught her brother in a trap she planned to bait for me."

Presently he laughed softly, returned the letter to its envelope, and placed it under the hand-glass on her dressing-table.

Mrs. Delafield opened her eyes—stared—shuddered—saw her husband looking at her—and an expression of disgust and hatred passed across her face.

"It's nothing . . . I'm all right," she said. . . . "Please go away. . . . I want to be alone."

And Delafield went—with an amused smile.

He was at his salad when the butler laid an envelope at his hand.

"By messenger," the man explained.

Delafield turned it over. It was from his brother-in-law. He cut the flap, drew out the sheet and read:

Dear Old Chap:

Just a line to explain my earlier one to Kathleen—of which you have doubtless heard by this time. I trust it gave her a jolt. She needs one or several. I've no sympathy with Kathleen; I wanted to save you. Miss Chartiers is a professional co-respondent. She was employed by Kathleen to trap you. I recognized her instantly from her photograph, which Jim Parker had shown me. She was the lady in that case. Moreover, I must admit that I am not entirely disinterested; I, too, succumbed the moment I looked into those wonderful blue eyes. She comes high, but she's worth the price—for a few months. Meanwhile, the loss of the five thousand plunks that Kath paid to her on account will serve as an additional lesson to little Kath not to meddle with husbands. You may use your own discretion when to tell Kath the facts, and so relieve her mind as to the "marriage." I fancy there isn't the remotest chance of her babbling.

Fred.

And the butler wondered at his master's soft, but clearly audible, chuckle and extremely broad grin.

THE SECRET

By C. R. Prouty

SHE was by far the most successful millinery saleswoman in one of New York's largest department stores. Asked the secret of her success, she smiled but made no reply. One day she was shot by a floor-walker whose attentions she had scorned, and among her possessions was discovered a diary. It revealed her secret. This is the tell-tale extract:

"Woman is a changeable being. She is a nervous bunch of enthusiasms and regrets. I have to sell women hats, and years of experience have taught me how to make use of my knowledge of my lady's frailties. After a woman has tried on every hat in the place her choice usually narrows down to two. Of these she can't make up her mind which to choose. Everybody is appealed to. At last she decides on one and orders it sent. As she steps into her motor she sighs with relief to think it is done. Threading her way through the streets of the city, she thinks of the other hat. She has made her choice. Now, possession breeds contempt. By the time she reaches home she is fully dissatisfied. The other hat would have matched her blue dress, or her pink dress, or whatever is the color of her most recently acquired gown. Perhaps it would have matched the new touring car. Then, too, she remembers that Mrs. Smith has a hat the same shape as the one she has selected. She will think she has copied it. Horrors! When the hat box arrives she shudders at the very idea of opening it. Can you imagine her joy, when, pulling off the lid, she discovers I have sent her the other hat?"

THE UNFORGOTTEN

By Muna Lee

I CAN forget so much at will:
That first walk in the snow,
The violet bed by the April rill,
The song we both loved so;

Even the rapture of Love's perfect hour.
Even the anguish of Love's disdain—
But never, but never, the little white flower
We found one day in the rain.

THE TEST

By Donal Hamilton Haines

"YOU know, Jennings, you're an interesting person!"

Pierson Jennings lowered his newspaper and stared over the edge of it at the only other occupant of the smoking-room.

"Just why do you say that?" he inquired pleasantly.

"Because I mean it, and because I'm sure that you won't take offense," answered the other.

Jennings folded the paper neatly and laid it across his knee. He was not offended. People always made wild allowances for the queer things which Tony Blake said. But Blake had never addressed one of his queer speeches to Jennings before, and he was actually gratified to be thus singled out.

"Really?" he said. "I thought I was too commonplace to strike anyone as interesting."

Blake smiled and knocked the ash off his cigar.

"What you mean by commonplace," he answered, "is normal, and that's quite a different thing. You're so astonishingly normal that you're interesting. You're like one of those little figures on patent thermometers; under certain circumstances, you'll always do the same thing. Why, I could predict the whole remaining forty years of your life and never go wrong on a single important detail."

Jennings appeared as impersonally interested as though the comment was being passed upon some other man.

"Oh, isn't that making me a rather dull sort of person?" he said mildly.

"Not at all," answered Blake. "I should hardly be brusque enough to put such a thought into speech. Far from thinking you dull, Jennings, I envy you more than any man I know."

"Not really!"

"Yes I do. I'd give anything if my life were as well ordered as yours. Why, you'll be a hale and hearty figure on the golf-links when I'm in a wheel-chair or a grave. There's just one thing—"

"What's that?"

"The question of what you'd do if something with your life should go wrong. It's a million to one that nothing ever will, but if it should, I wonder how you'd meet it!"

Jennings laughed as he tossed the paper onto the reading table and rose from his chair.

"I shall feel that you're always watching me and waiting for the catastrophe," he said.

"Good Lord, don't do that!" protested Blake. "I'm not that sort of a vulture. But I'll tell you what I will do!"

"What?"

"I'll write you a formula to be followed in case the unexpected happens and you do come a cropper."

"Splendid! Give it to me now."

Blake stared at him thoughtfully, then picked up a pen and wrote a single line on a sheet of the club's notepaper. He looked at it, sealed it in an envelope, then hesitated.

"See here, Jennings," he said, "sheer curiosity will drive you to read that before morning, and then you'll be damning me for a long-nosed meddler."

"No I won't," answered Jennings. "I shall open it only when the impossible becomes the actual."

"If that's a promise, here you are,"

and Blake tossed the envelope across the table.

Jennings put it in his pocket and nodded, smiling.

"Thanks," he said, and walked out of the club.

Blake relighted his cigar and frowned.

"Any other man," he muttered, "would open that envelope within ten minutes and be back here in half an hour wanting to break his cane across my shoulders!"

* * *

Jennings left the club and walked up Front street, swinging his cane and sniffing the spring air gratefully. He was thinking of what Blake had said, but he had no temptation whatsoever to open the envelope.

The truth of Blake's blunt remarks, instead of irritating him, had filled him with a wholesome satisfaction. It was something to have a clever, brainy chap like Tony Blake confess that he envied you!

"And when you come right down to it," Jennings said to himself, "he isn't to be blamed for envying me. It's not surprising. I'd envy myself if I stood in his shoes."

His life was a satisfying thing, containing no such uncertainties as were continually besetting men like Blake. It was perhaps true that he missed some things which fell to the lot of other men, but he felt that this was a gain rather than a loss. Life, in the end, was a thing of averages, a thing to be measured by the sense of security and stability which it gave one. Exotic intervals, intense moments of delight which must be paid for by their logical and inevitable reactions, did not count. At least they were not the marks by which the real value of life was to be estimated.

Since the first day on which he had realized that the business with which he was confronted was the making of adjustments between himself and the rest of the world, Pierson Jennings had devoted himself to making those adjustments as comfortable and permanent as possible. A part of his task had been made easy for him, but he had relied upon himself for the final strengthening of his position. He had backed up his father's money with the soundness of his own conduct. He had moved through life cautiously but without fear, achieving no brilliant success, but making no mistakes.

Before he was thirty, he had managed to win the good opinion of most of the older men of the city with whom he had been thrown in contact—a triumph which was achieved purely through negative qualities. He had made no mistakes, been guilty of no follies or excesses. He was called solid, and given credit for a greater material success than he had actually won.

He had not done all of this consciously. He had been occupied solely in ballasting and making smooth the path on which he expected to move through life. He had made his modest fortune secure against loss, but, having no taste for idleness, he had built up a rather distinguished legal practice. He had taken excellent care of his body, and had exercised as great care in his choice of activities as of his food. He did only those things which were consciously pleasurable or consciously beneficial to some part of him.

As the final step, he had married Dorothy Hackett.

His marriage had been the most successful of his carefully planned ventures. It would have been so easy to have married the wrong woman, and Dorothy was so plainly the right one! She had exactly filled the place in his life which he had left for a woman. She was pretty, vivacious, a very bundle of nervous energy. People had remarked upon the sharpness of the contrast between them, but Jennings had counted upon this very element. He had known that a woman too much like himself would not do at all.

He could give Dorothy just what she seemed to ask. Her position as his wife was considerably above that which she had enjoyed before marriage, yet just

enough short of what she might now make for herself to supply her with the spur of a healthy ambition.

They had been married a year and a half, and those eighteen months constituted the distinct, the final period of Jennings's life. It had been something more than the quietly stimulating joy of possessing a beautiful woman which had set it apart from the rest of his existence. The mere presence of Dorothy in the house seemed to round out his life to fulness, to seal a seal upon all that he had done. She was the final stone in the structure which he had spent thirty years in building.

Always the finest moment of the day was that in which he turned toward home. It made no difference how long he had been absent, or how the time had been occupied, the feeling remained the same. As he came into the neighborhood in which his house stood, he warmed expansively at the mere appearance of the houses. They were all distinctive, aristocratic.

"This," he would mutter inaudibly to himself, "is where I live. This is the environment into which I fit."

As he came in sight of his own house, he invariably slackened his pace. The contemplation of the structure which sheltered him afforded him a sensuous pleasure. It was a well-built house of irreproachable design. He walked the last block slowly in a mild glow, ascended the steps with studied deliberation—glad of the chance to exchange decorous salutes with one of his neighbors during the process—and tasted the final bit of delight in fitting his key into the lock with a steady hand.

It made no difference whether Dorothy was alone or not. He liked to watch her with other women, to revel in the contrast which was always to her advantage, or to delight in her assured, easy manner with other men.

Indeed, he was not even disappointed if she was not there to meet him. Nor was this entirely due to the fact (on which he prided himself) that there was little demonstrativeness in the relations between them. He knew simply that the pleasure of seeing her would be deferred, and he was given time for enjoyable speculation as to what form their encounter would take, how she would be dressed, and into which of her many moods the day's activities would have thrown her.

"Let me see," he murmured as he mounted the steps, "this is Tuesday. It's not her afternoon at home, and yesterday was a trying day. Very likely she's in and alone."

As he fitted the key into the lock, he debated telling her of his conversation with Tony Blake. He decided that he would do it, in spite of the rather uncomplimentary angle she might sense in Blake's remarks. It was always enjoyable to put a new thought in the grip of Dorothy's nimble wits; it was like watching a kitten play with a spool of thread.

"Our points of view," he thought as he hung up his hat and stick, "are in a way as far apart as the poles, yet that only increases the zest of it."

He walked into the richly appointed, well-proportioned hall and stood looking up the stairs, listening for the sound of her quick footsteps on the floor of her room. He heard nothing.

"Upstairs, Dorothy?" he called.

There was the sound of a quick movement in the drawing-room. Jennings turned sharply and looked through the wide doorway. Dorothy stood in the middle of the room, her hat on, a light jacket thrown carelessly over the back of a chair from which she appeared to have risen. Beside her was a man Jennings had never seen. He was a powerfully built man of medium height, with a very dark, angular face and a close-cropped black moustache. He wore a loose-fitting suit of shaggy blue cloth, a soft collar and a bright-colored tie.

"Come in, Pierson," Dorothy said quietly.

Jennings walked into the room, but stopped as soon as he had crossed the threshold. He was conscious of a queer sensation, of a sudden sense of hopeless inadequacy in the face of a

danger which had not yet taken form, but which had somehow suggested itself in that sound of furtive movement in the drawing-room behind his back. Coupled with this was a subtle, groundless fear of the man in front of him, a fear built of certainty that the man was more fitted to cope with this unformed danger than he was. He wanted to sit down in a chair to meet whatever it was that had to be met.

"This is Harding Fall, Pierson," he heard Dorothy's voice saying. "I think you've heard me speak of him."

Purely from force of habit, Jennings bowed slightly. The other man did not move, but stood with his hands hanging at his sides, with a sort of easy, poised alertness.

Jennings's mind did several things simultaneously. It flashed to him a recollection of Harding Fall's name—some sort of a wild, free-lancing artist-poet chap with whom Dorothy had had an impossible youthful affair. At the same time his brain was lashing him to do something to end the intolerable suspense of the strained moment, to speak some trite words that would force things back into place. He could not do it; he could do nothing but stand and stare at Fall's bright-hued cravat.

Dorothy turned to him with a nervous abruptness.

"I'm going away with Harding," she said.

There was no falling inflection at the end of the sentence. She left it hanging, as though she knew it was not complete, but could not finish it. Her face, as she glanced at her husband, showed a strange mixture of helplessness and defiance.

For a few seconds, Jennings was incapable of speech. His mind refused to form a coherent thought. It darted crazily this way and that, and its unsteadiness frightened him. The feeling of baffling impotence increased and maddened him. He could find no word, could not force into his own brain any thought of the course of action upon which he must determine without the loss of an instant.

Harding Fall moved for the first time. He took a single step toward Jennings, his head bent a little forward, his brown hands balled into fists. He spoke sharply, incisively, the words leaping after each other. Yet he was perfectly calm; his voice low and controlled.

"Call it anything you like, Jennings," he said. "Threats and abuse won't change the fact that this woman loves me and is going away with me. The thing's bound to happen; but choosing the way of it lies with you. There's no one but yourself to consider—which ought to satisfy you perfectly! I've fought tooth and nail for everything I've had of life; I'll fight for her with every weapon I can touch if you drive me to it. It will be better for all of us if you forego doing all the conventional, useless things."

There was a humming in Jennings's ears. A single sentence—"What must I do? What must I do?"—seemed hammering in his head in time to his thickened pulse. He passed his tongue over his lips.

"Is this true?" he demanded.

He did not look directly at his wife. He let her infer that the question was hers to answer. He saw her lift her head quickly.

"Yes," she answered.

The word carried away the last shred of his defences, yet it gave him back the power of speech and action. Unconsciously, he had been expecting Dorothy to waver, and to aid him by her weakness. Now he was facing the two of them alone. He suffered horribly, yet the very severity of the pain aided him.

"But why!" he cried, "why? I've done nothing. There's been nothing—We've been happy!" He swung round on Fall with a sudden flare of impotent rage. "I tell you, we've been happy!"

"Happy!"

Dorothy's voice was like the snapping of a taut cord. Both men turned and looked at her, Jennings with a

nervous start, Fall with a quick movement of the head.

"What right have you to talk of my happiness?" she demanded. "Oh, but you would, you would—you would do exactly that! My happiness! Yours! You have made me a pretty ornament for this pretty house, covered me with pretty clothes so that I might look well beside you on the street and appear well where other people would see us together! You cared for me—as far as you can care for anything—because I did credit to your taste!"

Jennings made a feeble gesture of protest, the merest hint of an intention to interrupt. She checked him by the concentrated violence of her tone.

"I knew the bargain I made if you were too blind to see it. I knew what you wanted of me. I was a coward. I was afraid to try to live without the things I wanted and which I knew you could give me. I thought they might take the place of what I threw away. I've let you stifle me for what seems like an eternity. Now I'm through. I'm going."

She caught up her jacket from the chair beside her and moved quickly past Jennings into the hall. Fall followed her instantly. Jennings trailed helplessly after them, striving for the power of instant, violent action.

Close to the wall of the vestibule were two suitcases which he recognized as Dorothy's. The sight of them, the cold, brutal finality of their appearance stung him. A sudden realization of the overwhelming loss which was almost upon him goaded him to fury.

With a cry, he leaped forward. His purpose was not very clear in his own mind. It seemed to him that violence alone could save everything. He had some vague idea of getting between his wife and the door, of facing them, of beating them down with a flood of words which the surging, tormenting sensations within him must produce.

Fall had stopped to pick up the suitcases. At Jennings's cry, he dropped them and straightened himself.

"Don't!" he said sharply.

But Jennings rushed at him blindly. Fall poised himself easily, drew back his right arm and struck with the calculating skill of the natural fighter. Had the blow struck Jennings squarely, it would have felled him. As it was, he saw Fall's movement, and checked his own rush. The other's fist struck his chin as he was backing away. He reeled, sprawled awkwardly across the room until he crashed into the wall, then stood there, holding his chin in both hands, and staring at his assailant with the wide, astonished eyes of a frightened child.

Fall drew a long breath of satisfaction, passing his left hand caressingly over the knuckles of his right.

"Is that enough?" he demanded. "Do you begin to understand that this is deadly serious, that there are no lengths to which I won't go?"

Jennings did not answer. He had never before in his life been struck. The blow pained him, but it had shocked his entire being. He thought of nothing but the necessity of keeping out of reach of that sledge-hammer fist. Again that feeling that Fall could meet such situations and he could not baffled him, tied his tongue. He could only stand there looking at them.

There was an interval of silence, then Dorothy opened the door with a jerk.

"Come, Harding," she said.

In the doorway she turned and looked very straight at Jennings.

"If you'd struck back," she said in a low tone, "if you'd fought for me until he'd beaten you within an inch of your life, I think I would have stayed, and wild horses couldn't have dragged me away!"

Jennings did not move. He saw Fall close the door, saw them cross the porch and go down the steps. After they had passed out of sight, he could still hear the click of their heels on the cement walk. Then there was silence.

Almost unconsciously he crossed to a small mirror and examined his chin. It was red, but the blow had left no other marks. He walked into the hall,

stood there an instant uncertainly, and then examined the doors leading into the back part of the house. They were all closed tightly. No sounds of what had occurred could have reached the servants.

He walked into the drawing-room and sat down in a chair. He remained motionless for some time, then sat up, reached into his pocket and took out the envelope which Tony Blake had given him.

There was a single sentence written in Blake's squat, blunt hand:

"I wouldn't try to get her back if I were you!"

HO, HUM!

By Bruce Reid

SHE married for love.
She thought she had found her ideal.
But soon she saw that he was just an ordinary man—like her brother.
He answered in monosyllables instead of epigrams.
He forgot to compliment her eyes and her hair.
His answers to "Do you love me?" were "Yes, yes," spoken impatiently.
He talked about food instead of poets.
Grand Opera and Little Theatres bored him.
Money meant more to him than soul.
So she took a lover.
Because she wished to be honest, she ran away with him.
She thought she had found her ideal.
But soon she saw that he was just an ordinary man—like her husband.
He answered in monosyllables instead of epigrams.
He forgot to compliment her eyes and her hair.
His answers to "Do you love me?" were "Yes, yes," spoken impatiently.
He talked about food instead of poets.
Grand Opera and Little Theatres bored him.
And money meant more to him than soul. . . .

NEVERTHELESS, it is even harder for the average ape to believe that he has descended from man.

THE INTERLOPER

By Harry Kemp

WHY had not her mother, or some one, told her? It was so different from what she had conceived it, expected, this state of holy matrimony, as far removed from her former life as one could imagine. So this was what had been concealed beneath the rose and gold of the poet's fancy, the talk of the sentimentalist, the stories of love and courtship she had so eagerly, so believingly read!

All of a sudden the veil had been rent, and the great, raw crudities of life and nature lay open before her, She had been dazed, shocked, dumbfounded. She felt that she could never accept the companionship of a man, even that of the man she loved, to whom she was married.

She knew that he was as gentle, as considerate as ever, but the flower of something had gone, the elusive, delicate perfume of life that had been hers in the days of her courtship, and before that, when she was still a dreaming girl.

Her husband could not understand why she cried so much and had such strange psychic disturbances. Sometime he thought her rather queer . . . or else all womenfolk were queer.

Sometimes, after kissing him goodbye in the morning, she would sit and think for hours at a time, not stirring from her seat in the window, looking out into the sunshine, he being away at his work.

The world would seem to be full of a sad quietness and the ghosts of maidens would haunt her with such a sweet melancholy that she would weep and be strangely happy because of her tears.

And then, like as not, she would be seized with sudden and unaccountable fits of gaiety. . . .

And at times she wouldn't want to be kissed . . . and at other times she would,—and, as her husband couldn't read her mind, he generally, to his subsequent consternation, chose the wrong time.

And when he would become unusually vexed he would swear to himself that women didn't know their own minds.

He was on the verge of an upheaval as well as she, for to have to think always in terms of two instead of one, as he had hitherto been accustomed, was a strange and complicated enough thing to get used to. But with him, his man's nature and previous experience stood him in good stead and saved him from the truly terrifying perturbations that drove in on the woman he loved, like conflicting winds. And, also, he had daily work, a business which engrossed his attention, his every faculty, and took his mind off himself. She, on the other hand, must make blind and unguided efforts to build all her life and interests on her love for her husband.

All he knew to do, when she wept unaccountably, was to pet her, clumsily trying to console her. He would ask her what was the matter and she would exasperate him by answering that she didn't know. Sometimes he considered her stubborn, perverse, impossible. But all the time he looked on her more and more as on some mysterious, translunar being . . . called her "angel" . . . He thought, romantically, that she liked such appellations. Sometimes she did, but mostly she didn't. She resented the

old language, now that their relations were so fundamentally different. She wanted him to be serious with her, to treat her as a fellow being. She detected insincerity and cant in his expressions, when there was none . . . for, to him, she really seemed to be a superior being—so much did his ignorance of her real nature, and of her hidden feelings and inexplicable moods, keep him in awe of her!

As for herself, she determined that men were stupid and clumsy by nature, that they didn't, never *could,* understand women. She never realized that she, as well, did not understand men. It is thus that every marriage begins on mutual misunderstanding—that is why the first few months are so perilous. How can the little god steer the ship unerringly, when we compel him to stand blindfolded at the helm—blindfolded, but otherwise utterly naked? What a pilot to set all the world adrift with, two by two!

And now the sun went down on a day of days, a day to be marked black forever on the calendar for the rest of her life . . . for how could she ever forget or forgive?

They had quarrelled!

"I have done my best," he said, "to understand you . . . I have danced to your least whim . . . I can endure this no longer!"

"Why, Charles," she had answered, "I don't know what you mean! . . . I . . . I!"

"And I *never* know what *you* mean!" he was going to say, but he saw dewy premonitions of storm in her eyes and quickly took her into his arms . . . and as quickly forgot it all—which she did not, for she brooded over it, that night, while he lay peacefully asleep by her side. How *could* he sleep? The brute! . . . how unfeeling and callous men were!

And now it all burst clear, like a sunrise, on her. She was homesick—homesick, so to speak, for the companionship of another woman, for a being that belonged to her own race . . .

This strange being, this man, that lay so care-free beside her, he was not of her world, of her ways of thinking, and never could be. They were, as man and woman, as far apart as two worlds moving in separate spaces of sky, held together by strange laws of love and marriage—as two planets are held together by gravitation, otherwise travelling through sundering voids.

A sense of hopelessness, of the futility of an endeavor that would never attain its object, possessed her.

She had a vision, apart from herself, of the man with whom she lived. Yes, they had been much nearer to each other during courtship. Indeed, at times, under the exaltation of the unfulfilment of love, they had seemed mystically merged in one. Now they seemed utter strangers. They *were* utter strangers. So she thought as she calmly appraised him.

How different he was from her, as he lay there with his close-cropped hair, his heavy masculine features . . . His moustache gave the final alien touch . . .

Then she visualized him going about in his bifurcated male clothing . . . his sober, close-fitting coat, with its pockets . . . his tie and white collar . . . his white cuffs . . . going down town to his business . . . to his office to chaffer and bargain with others of the man-tribe. He seemed an interloper, a transient influence in her life.

As she externalized him further, she grew frightened at him, lying there so composedly . . . he was like an animal . . . her flesh crept . . . she wanted to scream . . . she rose and walked aimlessly about the house, her face as white as the sheets she had just left, as colorless as her night-robe.

How queer, how *terrible,* yes, terrible—it all was . . . to be married! . . . She wanted another woman around . . . someone she could talk with in woman-language . . . Again that mood came over her.

She saw his razor lying there, out of its case, and the long, black, perpendicular-dangling strap on which he sharp-

ened it . . . and his stick of shaving soap, all of which became to her grotesquely symbolic of masculinity . . . In every way the being that lived with her was alien . . . she could never get used to a man . . .

She paused in the dining room . . . she laid her head forlornly on her arms . . . again and again wished, cried out, in her heart, for a fellow woman to be with . . . thought of her mother . . . almost cried aloud for her, as if she were in the next room . . .

Her husband woke, and came to find her . . .

"What's wrong, dear? For God's sake tell me! Are you sick?"

Her lips trembled . . . she did not answer . . .

Once more he got angry . . . at what he honestly called her obstinacy . . . he thought she was stubborn . . . unfair . . .

She had tried hard to speak, but couldn't.

He forgot—or never knew—that speech is the latest, the most dispensable language love has acquired.

"Come to bed!"

She didn't stir.

"This *is* the limit . . . you'll catch cold . . . are you going to stay up all night?"

Now he was making her angry . . . her faced flushed. She detected a latent irony, a hardness in what he had just said, which was not there.

He paused irresolutely. His pride would not let him obey his instinct, to go to her and bend over her, tenderly . . . afraid he was of the rebuff he might get . . .

"Well—stay up then! . . . but I'm going back to bed!" Instantly he was ashamed of his querulousness, which she had as instantly mistaken for harshness.

He snorted back to the bedroom; he tossed sleeplessly for a few minutes. Then he muttered, with a quaint, instinctive masculine pride in her inexplicable womanliness, "Bother the girl" —and went to sleep.

After she was sure of his regular breathing, she tip-toed through the bedroom and went to sleep on the drawing room sofa.

They breakfasted in silence.

She considered him a brute . . . he had deceived her . . . he was not the man he pretended to be . . . Thank goodness, at last the mask was off.

And he was waiting for an opening—when he might be sure not to get one of his many rebuffs for his pains.

He had no sooner gone than she was seized with a spell of weeping, which was succeeded by a ratiocinative calm, a coolness of decision that amazed even the possessor of it.

Yes, the brute had come!

She had been travelling in a foreign country, and she was homesick . . . she would go home to her family, to her sisters . . . to her mother . . . to woman-beings like herself that she could live comfortably with and understand.

She would never, never see her husband again. Divorce? Yes, if he wanted it, and she supposed he would. As for her, it was a matter of indifference, as she was through forever with that strange, alien, absurd, callous-hearted biped, Man!

She hurriedly got her immediate personal effects together. She could have her trunks sent on later.

On the train she had a soaring sense of maiden freedom, a re-birth of girl-happiness . . . it was just as if she had become a girl again. She pitied the married women she saw sitting by their husbands, despised the men. How dry and dejected they appeared. She considered herself kin to all the girls in the coach, but with a sight and wisdom exceeding theirs . . . wished she could warn them to remain single.

Her brother's little dog, as she walked in at the front gate, recognized her and tumbled upward and upward in successive cataracts of yelp and warm lick . . .

Now she was in her mother's arms, her heart nigh the bursting for joy,

and obscurely attended by sorrow.

Her mother asked her no questions but one—a very pertinent one. "Where's Charley?"

Then, before she could think, the young wife had answered,—

"Oh, he was too busy to come . . . so I came on alone."

Her mother asked nothing further. But she saw that something was wrong. She took her daughter to the room which she had occupied in her maiden days.

That night the mother sat by her bed and heard the story of the first quarrel . . .

"And I shall never go back to him again—never!"

But what the young wife had now attempted was nothing short of a miracle. No matter how the rose may desire it, once full-opened, it can never return to the close-folded bud again.

If formerly she had felt herself to be in an alien country, now she had the sensation of trying to come back to a life the gate of which had swung outward for her, but through which she might not re-enter.

It was like trying to get back to yesterday. Everything had changed, was different. There were the same houses, the same trees, the same flower-beds, the same sunshine, yet strangely not the same. Worst of all, her people were not the same.

After breakfast the mother saw that the time for which she had waited was ripe.

She followed her to her room.

"Don't you think you had better go back to him, dear?"

"But, mamma—I can't!"

"Why not, dear?—don't you love him still?"

"Yes—But . . . but I left him a note!"

"You can explain that easily, dearest . . . if he loves you, as I am sure he does."

The young wife wept on her mother's breast. She couldn't explain it, she just couldn't. The note was a cruel one . . . almost insulting . . . No, she had broken with him forever—there was no retrieving . . .

Nevertheless, in a few hours she was on her way back to the city.

As she stood at the elevator door she imagined that, somehow, the boy must know about it and she read meanings in his usual greetings.

"A telegram came for you yesterday afternoon, ma'm—and I signed for it because there was no one in."

She ripped open the envelope . . .

The reading of it transformed her from a pale, frightened girl to a self-possessed woman. It ran:

> Called to Boston on business. Will be home to-morrow afternoon at two.
>
> Charley.

She glanced hurriedly at her wrist-watch and found it to be now just half-past one.

She flung open the door of the apartment and rushed in.

She snatched the note up from the table where she had left it for him. She tore it into infinite fragments, angry at herself for ever having written it.

Unheralded, a change had dawned over her. No longer did it seem strange to be living with a man . . . for now every evidence of her husband's wonted presence thrilled her.

She picked up his pipe with positive affection . . . she hurriedly made the bed, putting his pajamas lovingly away beneath his pillow . . . she took up his razor and slipped it back in its case.

As she tidied up she was thrilled with tenderness for him, thinking fondly of his small, masculine unneatnesses, where formerly such untidiness had annoyed and distressed her . . . after all, he was nothing but a big, clumsy, over-grown boy . . .

When the husband came in a few minutes later, dubious as to what to expect, but nevertheless hopeful, she met him at the door, made him spill an armful of bundles, and astonished and overwhelmed him with a rain of kisses . . .

THE RESCUERS

A STUDY IN THE ART OF PROTECTING LADIES

By Owen Hatteras

HER name was Camille Foe and that's what she was—decidedly *comme il faut.* You should have seen her skip across the Avenue de l'Opera and strike a pose on the opposite curb! What an ensemble! What a blending and melting of lines and delicate tints!

"So fair
She takes the breath of men away
Who gaze upon her unaware."

I know my dictionary of quotations!

The Bois de Boulogne, the Bois de Boulogne! 'Twas there that Georges Perrin, turning the bend of an unfrequented path, saw her struggling in the arms of a man. Georges was not uncompromisingly a man of action, but he realized the moral advantage he would acquire by saving her from her assailant. So he crept up behind them and planted a healthy right under the ear, being careful to pick out the ear with the short hair above it. The owner of the ear sprawled upon the ground. In falling he upset Camille and she came to the earth in a crash of silks and laces; she lay still in decorous disarray.

Georges gave his fallen victim a kick.

"Go away," said Georges.

The fellow withdrew like a whipped boy. Georges turned to the girl. How beautiful she was as she lay there; how unspeakably lovely in her tumbled hand-embroidereds! He knew now that he loved her even more than he had before. But she must be revived. He knelt and raised her head. For a moment he gazed at her beautiful face; she opened her eyes.

"Eh?" she said.

"Are you all right?"

"Mais oui—what has happened?"

"Don't you remember? You were struggling in the arms of a brute. I arrived just in time and pulled him away. As I did so he struck at me but hit you and knocked you out. So I thrashed him and sent him away."

Camille rose and smoothed out her frock.

"I'm sure I do not know how to thank you." He waved his hand grandly.

" 'Twas nothing," he said.

"I must go home. Will you accompany me, Monsieur Perrin?"

"You might call me Georges now, Camille."

"Well, Georges, then."

She extended her hand with a cordial smile which went to his head. How wonderful she was! He didn't blame that ruffian; *eh, bien,* he wished he had his nerve! Her hand clasp was thrilling; her soft little palm pressed against his for an exquisite moment—how warm her lips must be! He seized her roughly.

"Stop! Stop!"

But he didn't stop, much to his own surprise. Her lips *were* warm, and soft and sweet to kiss! He held her tightly while she struggled to free herself.

"Here you!" A heavy hand seized him by the shoulder and drew him roughly away.

"Eh? Est-ce possible? Georges Perrin! Our own pretty little Georges!" cried his captor.

"Please take your hand from my shoulder," said Georges with the dig-

nity that went so well with his little mustache. He knew that Gaston Morel had never liked him.

"Not yet," said Gaston. "Did he hurt you, Camille?"

"Not—not very much. I am so glad you came, Gaston!"

He extended his free hand. She took it in both of hers.

"What shall I do with him? Make him beg your pardon?"

"No, let him go. His apology would be as worthless as he is."

Gaston gave Georges a shaking that sent his hat flying.

"Allez! Vite! Depechez!"

Like a whipped boy the other picked up his hat and slunk away.

"Contemptible little lap-dog," muttered Gaston. "Which way are you going?"

"Chez moi."

"May I walk along?"

"I should be delighted."

They walked in silence for a while. Then Gaston smiled.

"Didn't he look funny when his hat flew off? Like a cartoon, *n'est ce pas"*

Camille laughed, lightly at first, then heartily, then immoderately. *Dieu,* she was lovely when she laughed! The narrowed eyes, the gleaming teeth, the heightened color, the fluttering of her throat as the quick, spasmodic breaths forced their way through it! The melody of it! *Dieu!* And then, as she controlled herself, the laugh ended in a kind of snort, the very humanness of which was the finishing touch, like the signature on a masterpiece. Think of having a laugh like that on the other side of your coffee urn at *petit dejeuner!*

"Like a novel, is it not, Camille? Big, strong hero comes along in the nick of time, saves little heroine from villain and then goes through the rest of the book trying to do in his own way what the villain was trying to do in his. But I hate long stories, do not you, also?"

She was thinking of something else.

"Yes," she answered absently, after a while.

Dieu! There was no mistaking that! She had paused a moment, thinking over his innuendo, and then had deliberately encouraged him.

"Camille! Sweetheart!"

"Do not! Oh, please do not! You are hurting me!"

She struggled vainly in his arms. By this time she was quite adept at struggling. The big, strong Gaston thought it was merely womanly fervor. Suddenly there was a crash and for Gaston it was a dark night with lots of shooting stars.

Camille looked wildly from the fallen man to this latest rescuer.

"What have you done?" she cried; "you have killed him!"

The latest rescuer's reply is somewhat difficult to translate. But perhaps this will give an indication of his manner of speech:

"No, I ain't. Leave him lay. He'll come to after a while. Come on, sweetie, let's get out o' this."

Camille followed him at a trot. Presently they stopped and looked at each other. The man's hand went up to a swollen place under his ear.

"That fellow must have used brass knuckles on me."

"Are you all right now?"

"Oui. You are all right?"

"Oui."

"Do you love me?"

"Oui, oui!"

He seized her in his arms.

"Do not! Please do not!" she cried.

"Why?"

"As I told you before, you will get my hair all mussed!"

She struggled vainly in his arms. But, fortunately, she had run out of rescuers.

NOWELL

DÉBUSSY VARIATIONS ON A MENDELSSOHN THEME

By Randolph Bartlett

IT was Christmas Eve, a fact which David Pearson realized, less from any feelings of his own in the matter than from observing that the Union League Club was just a little duller, if possible, than usual. His cronies were scattered among dozens of festive affairs, invitations to which he had persistently declined, preferring the boredom of a few days in comparative loneliness to the boredom of noise and gaiety in which he took no interest. He was distinctly and uncompromisingly an old bachelor, and if he had had any sense of the fitness of things he would have been sitting in a dimly lighted room, beside an open fire, watching wreaths of tobacco smoke form tender pictures of days gone by. But he disregarded all the best traditions, and his apartment was a blaze of light while he studied the financial pages of the *Post*. His attention was distracted by the sound of boys' voices, singing in the street, and idly curious, he raised his window slightly to listen.

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay."

The singing was particularly bad, but it interested Pearson because he used to sing that carol himself, years ago, and he experienced a little thrill to think that there were some of the pleasures of his childhood days that people had not been able to improve upon.

"When did I last sing that?" he mused. "It must have been the Christmas just before I went to college." He smiled broadly at the recollection that his principal ambition then was to force his voice down low enough to sing bass, and he began to hum a counterpoint to the treble that floated up from the street.

"Little Julia Connor used to sing the soprano quite prettily," he remembered. "Poor Julia! The last time I saw her, her voice had grown shrill and hard from constantly telling four children not to do things. But she was a lovely slip of a girl in those days. That was when all a girl needed was to be pretty and modest, and everything was brought to her. But what a noisy crowd it was at that party. After the singing was over, Julia slipped away into a quiet corner by herself. We were too boisterous for her. I remember feeling sorry for her, she seemed so neglected, so I went over and sat beside her and we talked about the high-school days that were just ended. The others romped away into another part of the big house, and forgot all about us. Then I began to notice how pretty she was, and what white, tapering hands she had. She didn't object when I took one of her hands in mine, and squeezed it a little, and she didn't object, either, when I put my arm around her shoulder, but just pretended not to notice. And then I kissed her. She couldn't help noticing that.

"'Oh, David! You mustn't! It isn't right!' she said, but she said it very softly, and there was no indignation in her voice. So I kissed her again, and a little bit harder. Then she drew away, and hung her head a little.

"She was a very pretty girl.

"'Julia, I love you,' I declared manfully, for I wanted more kisses, and so, I think, did she. I drew her closer again, and repeated it, and was rewarded.

"'And I love you, too, David,' she said.

"Too soon the others came looking for us, but before the evening was over we found a few minutes more together.

"'We won't tell anybody just yet,' she said, and I agreed promptly. And within a week she quarreled with me because I danced three times in one evening with another girl, who was a much better dancer.

"'You have broken my heart,' she said, sadly. 'I will never trust another man as long as I live.'

"And now pretty little Julia has four children and a hard, shrill voice."

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night.
All seated on the ground."

The boys in the street started another song, and David Pearson recalled another Christmas. It was just a few months before his graduation, and he was home for the holidays. A big church fair had been arranged for Christmas Eve, and the moving spirit was Esther Wallace.

"I wonder how the rector ever would have managed without Esther," Pearson cogitated. "In fact, people used to say that if Esther Wallace didn't pay a little more attention to her own affairs and a little less to those of the church, the first thing she knew she would be an old maid. She must have been thirty then. And the way she pounced upon me and made me help her with the decorations, because, as she said, it would keep me out of mischief for a few days! It was a good deal of fun, at that, and there was nothing churchey about Esther, so I didn't mind. We became very well acquainted, and when the evening of the fair arrived, and it was a big success, she kept telling me it would never have been half so good without my help.

"'You've been a dear boy, to give up your holiday like this,' she said.

"I felt that for once I was appreciated, and kept following her around all evening, ready to do anything she wanted. Of course she had to stay until the last to attend to everything, and, of course, I had to stay to see if there was anything I could do. And then I went into the little side room with her, to help her with her coat. Those were the days of the huge sleeves, and as I tucked hers into her coat I put my arms around her and gave her a vigorous hug.

"'My, but you're strong!' she said. 'Do you go in for athletics at college?' It was a rather dampening, matter of course way to take it, but I ignored the remark, and kissed her resolutely.

"'Oh, David! You mustn't! It isn't right!' she said.

"'Why not?' I demanded.

"'Well, for one thing, I'm years and years older than you.'

"I swore it made no difference, and kissed her several times more.

"'You're so strong,' she murmured, and made a showing of resistance.

"But it was the footsteps of the janitor, as he went around turning out the lights, that ended the matter for just then. I walked home with her, putting my arm around her waist whenever we came to a dark stretch of street. In the porch of her house I started it again, and again my strength was too much for her.

"'I love you, Esther,' I said at last, as it seemed the only thing to do.

"'And I love you, too, David,' she responded. 'But you must think of your career, and what your father would say. I'm much too old for you.'

"I didn't want to think what father would say, and declared it made no difference, that I was a man and had a right to my own life. She sighed, and said I would forget all about her when I went back to college, and I denied it with a few dozen more kisses for emphasis.

"Heavens, what a relief it was to me a few months later, to get a note from

her saying it was all a mistake, and that she was going to marry the rector. And so I wrote,

" 'You have broken my heart. I will never trust another woman as long as I live.' "

"It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old."

"Hm. That's funny! I suppose that song really has more to do with my being here to-night than any other one thing. What a row father and I were having that Christmas! I wanted to get out of his business and have him furnish me with capital for a venture of my own, and he refused. So I said I would quit anyhow, go to South Africa, and make my own way. We had quite a crowd at the house for the holidays, and it naturally percolated everywhere, that things were in a general mess in the family. Then, after dinner Christmas Eve they all began singing carols in the music-room. One by one they all dropped out and left the singing to Clara Forrester. Mother had been sounding the praises of Clara until I was tired of her very name, and so I sulked off into the den. A little later, Clara came in, humming, and pretended to be looking for something. She fiddled around a while, and then, standing behind my chair, deliberately parodied the lines, 'And man at war with man hears not the love song that they bring,' only she sang it, 'the love song that *I* bring.' It was neatly done, but I knew those old hymns pretty well, and recognized the change. But the point was that I was worn out with the row, and welcomed anything that might prove a congenial diversion.

" 'You have a beautiful voice,' I said, by way of starting conversation.

" 'Thank you kindly, sir, she said,' she warbled, and sat down on the arm of my big chair. "You don't seem very Christmassy,' she remarked, and proceeded to impart a little cheerfulness to the atmosphere of the den. Mother caught sight of us, and kept the remainder of the crowd steered in other directions. It was not long until I began to feel that life was not such a gloomy vale of tears, after all.

"And so it came about quite logically that I pulled her down upon my lap, and kissed her.

" 'Oh David! You mustn't! It isn't right!' she protested, but not violently.

"Why not?'

" 'Well, you see, we're not—that is, you're not——"

" 'Oh yes I am,' I declared, for she was a very nice girl, and it seemed the thing to do to reassure her, especially as the terms were pleasingly vague.

" 'You are what?'

" 'What you meant.'

"So we fenced back and forth, but she cornered me, so if it had to be I might as well make a good job of it, I decided. I drew her very close, kissed her thoroughly, and said:

" 'I love you, Clara.'

" 'And I love you, too, David,' she whispered, and snuggled in my arms.

" 'You won't go to South Africa, will you?' she pleaded, a little later. 'I wouldn't like it in South Africa.'

"And of course I promised, and went straight to my father and agreed to his plans without reservation. Then, because Clara's family moved to Chicago, and I insisted upon not marrying until I had made a place for myself in the world, independently of my sinecure in father's business, and would not go to Chicago, she broke off the engagement with a note which read:

" 'You have broken my heart. I will never trust another man as long as I live.' It was fully six months before she married into the beef trust."

"Oh, little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!"

"There seems to be no limit to the number of ways a man can make an idiot of himself, but Christmas time apparently collects them in one group, and defies you to escape them all. My luck has not failed me yet, though, and I suppose I am immune now. But I tremble to think of the things that

might have happened. There was Maybelle Grahame, for example. That was a narrow escape.

"It was the mistletoe did it. Probably I am no more averse to contributing my share to the fun on these occasions than most men, but I think I would have hesitated a long time before making any advances toward the giddy Maybelle in any other circumstances. I never saw a girl so plain, and yet so brazen about it. A girl with an appearance like hers should be becomingly modest. Then people will be sorry for her, and eventually someone will marry her out of pity. So Christmas was a field day for her. She used to get herself invited to the most exclusive places, and I could never see why, for everyone always treated her as if she had come in by the tradesmen's entrance when no one was watching the door.

"It must have been at the Thatchers' it happened—they were cousins of hers. And the way that girl was ignored! The others would be captured from time to time as they quite inadvertently found themselves, or were found, beneath the sprig of little white devilberries. But Maybelle could stand there by the hour, and she was as safe as if she had been in an empty house. You couldn't help feeling sorry for her. At least I couldn't. So I made a special effort to be nice to her, and then, waiting until no one was looking, on the principle that charity should not be made a public matter, I caught her waiting patiently under the bough and did the only fair thing. Did she appreciate it? Did she take it at its face value and let it go at that? She did not. She hung on with both arms, and the next thing we knew we were discovered, and her ardor was misinterpreted. You would naturally not expect a girl to be in that position unless she had received encouragement.

"So I had to protect myself, and for the remainder of the two days that the party lasted I had to make good. I endured it as well as I could, not being especially interested in any of the other attractions anyhow, and comforted myself with the thought that in a day or two I would be back in town and could escape.

"Escape Maybelle? What a chance! She telephoned twice a day. She wrote notes to me complaining of my neglect and saying that all her 'folks' were talking about it. She invited me to dinners and things, until I exhausted all my excuses, and had to run in duplicates. Finally she wrote and asked in so many words if she had been misled by my actions at the Christmas party. I replied that she apparently had. And then she wrote:

" 'You have broken my heart. I will never trust another man as long as I live.'

"And I guess she never did, for the last I heard she was still a spinster."

"Hark the herald angels sing,
'Glory to the new-born King'."

David Pearson drew a deep breath of relief. He always did when he thought of that escape, but on this occasion it reminded him of another adventure that had an element of peril of another sort, and likewise had its inception under the mistletoe.

"I wonder when someone will tabulate the various kinds of kisses, and list opposite each the occasions when it shall be permitted. When a man kisses a woman under the mistletoe he doesn't mean anything by it, and the woman has no business to take advantage of the situation to ensnare him. I could never understand why Alice Harrison did it. There were plenty of men anxious to make love to her, and tell her how badly her husband was treating her. Possibly it was because I was not in the crowd, and she wanted to complete the collection. I don't know that I am any more squeamish than most men, but somehow I never have overcome the old-fashioned idea that a married woman is the property of another man, and theft is not in my line. Still, when I kissed Alice that Christmas Eve, the way she took it and re-

sponded undermined whatever stability in the matter that I possessed.

"Lord, the cleverness of that woman! Having started the train of thought or emotion or whatever it is, she turned away with a little laugh, and pretended that it was an isolated incident, to be immediately forgotten. She played me like an experienced angler, until I was mad about her, and almost forcibly dragged her into a dark corner of the conservatory. And there I returned her gift of the early evening with all the accumulated interest.

" 'Oh David! You mustn't! It isn't right!' the hypocrite gasped.

" 'Why not?' I demanded. 'Hoarsely' is, I believe, the proper description of my tone of voice.

" 'I'm a married woman,' she explained.

"Of course my proper answer was that she should have thought of that sooner, but instead I made the usual remarks about her 'brute of a husband.' I presume that to the lover of a married woman her husband is always a brute. As a matter of fact, my recollection of Harrison is that he was a very decent fellow, and probably never did anything that Alice had not provoked him into. After indicating that such a husband did not deserve such a woman as she, I made my declaration:

" 'I love you, Alice.'

" 'And I love you, too, David,' she whispered, and then, 'But we must hurry back or we will be missed.'

"We were able to see each other only occasionally, and for mere fleeting moments, until one day she telephoned saying that she would be alone that evening, and I might call. But there happened to be a rather nasty murder trial going on at the time, and after reading some of the evidence I decided not to. She was very angry at first, and then very tearful.

" 'I don't believe you love me at all,' she said plaintively.

"The time seemed ripe, so I said perhaps there had been a mistake. And the woman had the effrontery to say:

" 'You've broken my heart. I will never trust another man as long as I live.' "

"Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!
Sing we clear."

"Oh hum! Those were the days when Christmas meant a pandemonium, a lot of fussing about presents, and a great deal of indigestibly rich food," David Pearson's recollections continued, "and when I think how I used to miss them after I really began to have serious interests in life, I am surprised at myself. Loneliness is the self-pity of a man with no resources of his own. So it was quite natural, before I had developed my attitude of independence toward existence, that I should feel lonely, and especially around Christmas time. It was the psychological moment for the arrival of Helena Burch. I wonder if that woman ever was married. She was rather vague in her allusions to her experience in that direction. But it didn't, and doesn't matter. She was not encumbered at that time at least. It was just after my first generally known success in the market.

"Where was it I met her? Must have been at one of those informal and somewhat questionable parties of Blake's. There was a good deal of that sort of thing going on at that time. I suppose there is yet. She was quite a frequent member of the gatherings at various bachelor apartments. One evening she asked me what I was going to do Christmas, and I told her I supposed I should be deserted as usual.

" 'So shall I,' she said. 'Let's have a little dinner and a mutual sympathy evening at my apartment.'

"It sounded interesting, and I accepted. I never did know just what to make of Helena at first. She had a Bohemian way with her, and yet everything was entirely proper. There was an invisible and yet clearly defined line beyond which you would not think of trespassing. At least I wouldn't. I always was a duffer at that kind of business.

"The evening was a great success. The dinner was perfectly thought out and the appointments exquisite. She was a connoisseur in wines, and had mastered the art of removing all the grossness from the act of eating. Then, while I smoked she played for me, and sang in a careless sort of way that a man likes to be sung to, as much as to say, 'I know I have no voice, but you are a friend, and it doesn't matter so much, because you know I am trying to entertain you as well as I can.' So eventually I became quite mellowed, and when she was tired singing and came over and sat beside me on the davenport, I naturally drew her over to me and kissed her.

" 'I love you, Helena,' I said.

" 'And I love you, too, David,' she answered. But even at the time it came to me with a sort of chilling effect that there was no conviction in her voice. Perhaps it was an echo of my own absence of ardor, but to me, recalling other Christmases, her tone sounded hard and cold, and there was little warmth in her embrace. However, it passed for what it was worth.

"I saw her several times after that, and usually at her apartment. Then, one evening, she said:

" 'David, I think I would like to have a nicer place than this, but I can't quite afford it. I have been looking at an apartment over on Riverside Drive. It is just what I want, and I could entertain you so much better there.'

" 'I couldn't ask for any better entertainment,' I protested.

"But she enlarged on the advantages of the more expensive place, and it would only cost ten thousand a year, and ten thousand, she averred, was nothing to me, but her income was so limited, and so on.

"And then I was very thankful that I had been a model of discretion. I said I would think it over, but I never went back. She telephoned several times, and tried to make engagements for dinner, but I always managed to evade. Finally, one day she said, in a tearful voice:

" 'David, aren't you coming to see me any more?'

" 'I think I had better not,' I told her, and then I wondered if she would say it. She did.

" 'You have broken my heart. I will never trust another man as long as I live.'

"But I had heard it done so much better that it made no impression."

"When Christ was born of Mary free—
In Excelsis Gloria!"

"How different was that Christmas dinner with Margaret Swayne! I wonder why I didn't marry her. Perhaps it was because I had no encouragement, and had grown too old to care to engage in a long, stern chase. John Walton accomplished it, but it took him more than a year of hard work. She had been a widow about five years when she took pity on me, and invited me to what she called 'a solitary feast of the forsaken,' at her house. I think that was the most homelike place I ever visited. There was no tinsel and show about it—just a plain home of a wholesome woman. We talked about old friends and old times, even about her dead husband, without the least sign of sentiment. I began to feel that I was leading an extremely lonely life, and losing touch with everything except business.

"Later, in her little drawing-room, we ran out of topics of conversation and she employed the phonograph for diversion. We listened in silence to half a dozen records.

" 'Margaret,' I said finally, 'what would you say if I were to make Christmas love to you?'

"She laughed happily. 'Do so by all means, if you think you ought to,' she said. 'But always remember that Christmas love, like Christmas presents, is not durable.'

" 'Your levity,' I said, 'has broken my heart. I will never trust a woman again as long as I live.'

" 'David,' she said solemnly, 'have you *ever* trusted one?'

"And I was forced to admit that I had not."

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay."

"Hang it, they're beginning all over again."

David Pearson leaned out of the window, and bargained with the waifs to end the concert, in consideration of a piece of gold, which was forthwith paid. Whereupon the old bachelor returned comfortably to his study of the financial pages of the *Post*.

But beside a fireplace in a distant home, a middle-aged woman who had once been slim and fair, was singing snatches of song as she and her husband decorated a fir tree, and wrote the names of four children on many parcels. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

And in a quiet rectory another woman was making a list of poor families that must not be forgotten in the morning. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

And in another home the wife of a millionaire was sewing busily on a silken trifle that was to be her own gift to her husband. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

And in a mission in the slums an unusually unprepossessing woman was being wept upon by a group of grateful mothers. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

And in a far distant city a woman was telling her husband how happy she was that they had left an old life behind them. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

And in a handsome apartment a mature but still beautiful woman was entertaining one of the merriest of gatherings. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

And in one of the most homelike homes of all, a pleasant-faced woman was enjoying the spectacle of a large house-party of young folk engaged in the pastimes of Yule. And she did not think of David Pearson all evening.

Yet he had remembered all of them.

YOU

By Robert Garland

NO matter where I go, you go with me;
You walk beside me morning, noon and night,
You are beside me in my little room,
Your hand upon my shoulder, cool and calm:
You're always with me—God be praised for that!—
And as I pen this worthless wordy thing
You hover over me;
I hear the hurried intake of your breath,
I glimpse your tender, understanding smile,
I thrill beneath your fleeting, fond caress,
And, in a flash, you drive my doubts away
And once more give me faith in my poor self.

ON THE LOATHSOMENESS OF A CERTAIN CAPITAL CRIME

By Lars Rue

HOW awfully disgusting is murder! The blood, the inquests. The greedy undertakers and bungling cops hastening to the scene. The nosey newspapers and inquisitive, gossipy old hens ask intimate family questions from grief-stricken and foolishly sobbing relatives. There is nothing artistic about it excepting the Hindu inscription on the letter opener, the weapon of the hunted fugitive, hiding in manholes, wharves, saloons, smoke-dimmed gambling joints and wet swamps.

After the perforated body is carried away by the commercially guided funeral director, who tells the reporters he will have charge of the arrangements, the blood stains remain for the janitor as stepping stones to popularity. He will take awed visitors about the scene year in and year out and relate the commonplace story about the muffled screams, the soft thud and the fleeing footsteps down the corridor. How awfully disgusting is murder!

THE HOUSEWIFE

By Page Low

I HAVE a neighbor,
Work-harried, prolific, shapeless.
Usually I see her
Hanging out hideous flannel garments.
Do you suppose she has a scarlet thread
In the drab woof of her?
Are there memories that faintly thrill, or is she insensate
Like a nerveless tooth?
Sometimes I watch her from behind my curtain and wonder
What there is in the world worth a woman's charm!

THREE proofs that the Creator is a humorist: democracy, hay fever, any fat woman.

THE DASH FOR A DIVINITY

By Vanderheyden Fyles

HONORIA felt it her privilege to hesitate. She detained the footman—plastic herald of the caller waiting amidst the colorful panels of the flamingo drawing-room below; herself, the while, meditatively turning the small card over and over in her soft, white hand.

It was one of those occasions—the unforeshadowed emergence of a remote husband—when no woman can trust her first impulse to be her final judgment. Honoria was a very nervous woman. She was sure of it. She frequently spoke of it. Indeed, it was the only subject that seemed to rest her. She felt it, therefore, outrageously disquieting to be thus pounced upon—and in the forenoon—by a discarded husband, pleasantly associated though he was with pure, young days when epigrams were new and emotions not prohibitively fatiguing.

"Why, Hanford," she listlessly enquired of the footman; "why, with the loss of taste apparently inevitable with advancing age, does the male sex lose all sense of what may decently be done in the morning?"

The servant was silent.

"You will, of course," Honoria went on, "not undertake to answer. It would be unpardonable in you. Also, it might be embarrassing to me. But you are at liberty to adopt the thought as a text at the next meeting of the Wednesday Evening Schopenhauer Club in the servants' hall."

"Thank you, madam." Hanford, however, hesitated. "May I, though, ma'am, before bringing your mind back to the mundane matter of the agitated gentleman fretting among the flamingos; may I, ma'am, mention that Schopenhauer is abandoned?"

The lady among the pale pink cushions may have looked mildly surprised.

"Rather I should say, ma'am," the man corrected, "that we have abandoned Schopenhauer. We have, if I may so express it, exhausted him."

"Quite likely." Honoria sighed. "However, you may continue to exhaust me with another impertinent remark or two while I decide whether my nerves will bear the heartrending pleasure of seeing again one whom I have set aside; of seeing him, furthermore, enhanced and aglitter with the novelty of a perspective."

"A perspective, ma'am," Hanford interposed, "is counted dangerous in the morning. Especially, I venture to think, to the highly bred."

Honoria drew herself up among her cushions. For a mere Dresden bit, she withered him rather legally. "I allowed you, Hanford—and for a stated purpose—only an irrelevant thought or two on Nordau, Nietzsche, or some such trivial generality; not upon myself. More than a superficial knowledge of my nervous limitations seems hardly allowable in a manservant. And my elegance of breeding is a matter which, I hope, you never will notice."

She raised a small mirror, set in amethysts, and scrutinized the reflection of her face. It could not possibly have failed to please her. Not a line, not a shadow, marred the delicate prettiness of her regular features. She slightly rearranged the soft, light hair that drooped over her pale forehead, and drew the clinging folds of her peignoir into more graceful lines about her.

"I will see Mr. Pelham here," she directed.

The footman would not have thought of so much as glancing about the boudoir, naturally; but he did venture the very slightest raising of a surprised eyebrow,—though of only one.

"Before you announce Mr. Pelham," Honoria concluded, "you will draw the rose curtains across the windows. I wish, on first sight of him, to suffer no unnecessary shock."

However, when Hanford had finished the shading of the delicately tinted morning-room, he still hesitated.

"If, madam," he humbly said, "any painful consequences come of your rashness in receiving a gentleman at ten-fifteen in the morning, you may depend on James Hanford to stand by you to the last drop of his heart's blood."

He bowed respectfully, and was gone.

The lady in mauve had not moved from among the mass of cushions on the voluminous couch when Laurens Pelham entered the room. He stood still, for some moments, just within the doorway. There was a silence: a vibrant silence, let us believe, yet, withal, a silence.

Finally Honoria spoke. "I have wondered for years," she said; "indeed ever since your tender farewell in the judge's private room, what I should say when we first met again." Her childlike gaze, as she spoke to him, was vaguely but quite placidly pretty. "But as I did not know whether the meeting would be in heaven or at an evening party, I could not plan definitely."

"You didn't, anyway, expect it would be in the morning, did you?" Pelham asked. He moved forward.

"That is an annoyance a woman naturally feels she has left behind her when she has dropped a husband."

Laurens looked mildly tragic. "I have come to you in great trouble," he explained. He spoke emotionally. Indeed, he blurted the information.

"Dear me," murmured the lady. However, she did not permit her concern to overwhelm her. "You had best sink into that large Moorish chair," she advised. "It will compose your mind."

He sat.

"It was recovered, you remember, from the Spanish Armada by a British admiral of noble family, to whose descendants it came down through many generations, r e a c h i n g u s, finally, through an auction room. I forget the name of the noble family; but I could, with small exertion, recall that of the auctioneer."

"No matter," Pelham sighed resignedly, "no matter."

Clearly he was perturbed. He endeavored to sink more deeply into the embrace of the ample antique. However, as it had more historical value than depths of comfort, he achieved small success. He sighed again.

"What memories this chair of destiny brings back!"

"Of the Armada?" Honoria vaguely asked, draping a long rose-point scarf about her.

"I was thinking," the young man explained, "of a later wreckage of great hopes; of, in fact, our brief but eventful marital career."

Honoria looked at her former husband silently for some moments. She was thinking how charmingly young he had grown under the beatific calm of regained freedom. The clearness of his complexion (she recalled it as often muddy in the mornings) might perhaps be as chargeable to the rose-colored curtains as to matrimonial release. But the influence of a happier state showed conclusively in his figure. She found it very alluring. It brought back to her mind, with a rush, her reason for marrying him. She had often, in her more idle moments, tried to recall what it might possibly have been. The recollection seemed to lead her into dreamy by-ways in memory's garden. She enjoyed the fragrance of the thoughts as she gazed at the handsome young man fretting on the relic of the Armada. However, she achieved some sternness of tone when she spoke.

"You hardly have come here—and at the vulgar hour of ten-twenty-two A. M.—to revive souvenirs of a marriage that began in hope and ended in the Divorce Court?"

Pelham stirred nervously, as though mention of the time of morning reminded him of the purpose before him. "I have come," he said, with some agitation, "for help, for advice. I have to come to you, Mrs. ——." He caught himself up. "What, may I ask, is the present name?"

"Just Honoria will suffice. The question of whether I have employed these last three years in matrimony or in complete rest is one which you forfeited the right to ask when you gallantly entered no 'defense.'"

"This is no time," Laurens retorted, with some force, "to quibble over a marriage more or less. I am distraught, perplexed, in great trouble. But I had best explain from the beginning."

Honoria glanced covertly at a small clock on her writing desk. She seemed to listen, as though for footsteps overhead. Then she gave her full attention to Pelham.

"I awoke this morning," he began. "I awoke early. I may add that I gained the conscious state with characteristic slowness. You perhaps recall my habit of waking—"

"I am not sure that it is in the best taste for me to recall too much. However, if you will tell me where this leisurely awakening occurred, I might decide—"

"That's the point," Laurens interrupted. "It slowly came to me that I was, in fact, in a hotel. It seemed an estimable hotel. However, when a man with chambers in town and a camp in the Adirondacks, not to mention a respectable number of clubs, awakes to find himself in a hotel, he naturally asks 'Why?'" He paused. "Twenty-one minutes after waking I asked myself just that."

"But why not your man? Why not someone likely to know?"

"Undefined sense of caution led me to proceed slowly," he replied. "And it was well. For, as I lay there, I worked it out that I was not alone. There was, in an adjoining room—"

Honoria interrupted him with a firm but not unpretty gesture. "Is this an entirely fitting tale to tell a wife?—whether 'ex' or active is immaterial."

"Entirely," he assured her. "For it came to me that I had, yesterday noon, in the presence of five hundred or so of our best people, married the lady."

Honoria was startled. She trembled, but with moderation. In a moment she found words. "While most gratifying in its reassurance as to the propriety of your recital," she said, "your revelation comes to me as a surprise."

She was sorry that at just that moment he looked quite so youthful and alluring. There are times in a woman's life when man is no better than an aggravation. Nevertheless, her tone, as she went on, was consistently impersonal.

Honoria touched her eyes lightly with a bit of fragile lace. "Man's eternal dash for a divinity," she murmured.

"Hope springs eternal in the masculine breast."

"Apparently. That is why the man is usually the first to tire of a marriage. Woman expects little. She suffers no disappointment."

"For happiness," Laurens went on, "one should marry in haste. Nothing is so fatal as to enter into matrimony discreetly, advisedly, soberly. It leaves no room for surprises; for doubts; for discoveries to go on with. We, you will recall, married after so long an engagement that it was only the second day of the honeymoon when we had to fall back on a violent quarrel to make conversation."

Honoria heaved a ruminative, musical sigh.

"This time," Pelham said, "I saw it to be wisest to marry blindly, recklessly, without deliberation. I concluded to select a bride emotionally, by cable, from among the buds who had blossomed during my exile."

"A sweet thought," murmured the wife.

"I had been away so long, I had to have something to go on. I made an impartial list of fathers."

"From the Social Register?"

"From Bradstreet's," he corrected. "In short," he hastened to conclude, "old John V. Harrington had a daughter or two on hand. The youngest accepted me."

"Not the little red-headed one?" the sweet lady asked.

"Perfect Titian type," Laurens retorted.

"Well, of course," Honoria purred, "you would have been away during the freckle period."

"And there she lies," Pelham ended sentimentally, "innocently sleeping."

"Is that all? Don't worry. She'll wake up. Wives do."

"My worry is that she will," he answered. "Any minute she may. What am I to say to her? How am I to talk? What are her interests, tastes, subjects?"

The woman saw the gravity of the situation. "Have you nothing to judge by, to go on?"

"But little," was the answer. "And yet how much may lie beneath her word! As we drove from the church, she spoke of my polo reputation. Once during the reception she pressed my arm lightly and murmured: 'I detest crushes.' When we reached the hotel, I told her her eyes were adorable. She said she had heard so, but never had looked into them herself."

There was a hushed, profound silence.

"And that was all she said?" Honoria murmured.

"All," Laurens breathed, in a husky undertone. "I feel that her words concealed a world of meaning. Yet they may have signified but little. You must know her, you naturally would know each season's Harrington girl."

"Oh, yes; I know her."

"Perhaps you could tell what lay behind the few words that fell from such fair lips; what fluttered in her heart beneath that soft, white bosom; what brilliant, individual thoughts flashed through the brain that must lie beneath such glorious hair."

I am inclined to think Honoria could have. Yet she told nothing. She was silent. Perhaps it came to her that there is one great moment in the lives of each of us; one moment of renunciation, of complete unselfishness, of supreme sacrifice. The woman's is a silence. Honoria looked at the handsome young man puckering his brow in wonderment, palpitating in the very ecstasy of male stupidity. She was tempted, but she rose to the full height of her great moment. She said nothing.

Suddenly a door flew open. The man and the woman stared in surprise. Hanford stood before them. His manner was not his own.

"Silence," he said, holding up a warning hand. "Lose no more time." He closed the door softly behind him. He came forward.

"I will save you both," he said. "But you must trust in me."

The small clock chimed the hour of eleven. Honoria glanced toward it. For be a clock ever so giddy, small and ornamental, there is a warning in its every utterance.

"First, madam, be assured that I have guarded your reputation as I would my life. And I will see you safely through this adventure to the end. The master shall never know of this meeting at such a time of day."

"The master?" Laurens echoed, almost forgetting, for the instant, the peril of the situation.

"Why, yes," said Honoria; "I married Dick Gordon one day. You remember Dick: good shoulders. All considered, he suits me very well."

"Good old Dick," said Laurens. "Always liked old Dick."

"If we pause for pleasantries, sir, all is lost," Hanford interrupted. He addressed himself again to Honoria. "I connived with Mr. Gordon's man to give him a sleeping powder to keep him in ignorance. But he has spent so many evenings at the play, of late, that it had no effect. Nothing will keep him in

bed any longer. Absolutely nothing, madam. As for public scandal, I had the presence of mind, at the very start, to direct Mr. Pelham's chauffeur to keep the car in front of a house around the corner, to allay suspicion. And I will smuggle Mr. Pelham out by the servants' entrance. It has been done, madam."

"I hope," said Pelham, "that I may be trusted to hesitate at nothing to guard a lady's honor."

"And for yourself, sir," the servant said, turning to him, "you yet have time to get back to your bride without your absence becoming known. She doubtless has not yet arisen."

The bridegroom moved as though to go.

Hanford stood before him. There was nothing of the footman in his attitude. He spoke directly, easily, without hesitation.

"And take my advice with you, sir. The foundation of married happiness is mystery. Love it, sir; honor it; cherish it. Keep it in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all frankness, keep thee only unto it, so long as ye both shall live. You see, sir, men in my position see both sides of the union. Neither the lady or the gentleman bothers to keep in the character before only us."

Honoria was visibly agitated.

"Oh, madam," the footman said to her, "be assured I will not go too far. You are divorced. And you may both be divorced again, and often. But no one whose business is discretion would count on any divorce, nowadays, being unbinding until death."

Honoria relaxed.

"I only wanted to warn you, sir, as you stand on the threshold of this new matrimonial enterprise," he went on to Pelham, "that gentlemen should hold the interest, admiration, love of their wives by the ladies' own tactics. Be an enigma, sir; an enigma with a good figure and romantic eyes. When in doubt how much to tell your wife, tell her nothing. Speak to her only with your eyes. The ladies like it, sir; and it is always safe."

A heavy step sounded from the bedroom above. Pelham moved nearer the door.

"One last word, sir. Never let yourself forget the reason for your wife's attraction. Respect her impenetrableness. Believe in it. Do not try too hard to fathom it. There is nothing so painful in life as looking for the truth and finding it."

The footman drew himself up erect. He held the door open. Pelham paused a moment to kiss the tips of Honoria's fingers. When he was gone she lifted her soft, white hand to her own lips. She sighed pensively. A door above was heard to open, and a heavy foot to sound on the stairs.

"Your advice is good," whispered Pelham, as he and Hanford picked their way noiselessly down the servants' stairway. "It lights up a long life of happiness before me. I thank you."

"Thank you, sir," said the servant.

REFLECTION

I KNOW that what Nietzsche said is true,
And yet—
I saw the face of a little child in the street,
And it was beautiful.

DUALITY

By John E. Rosser

A MAN looked upon a woman. To him her eyes were pools of silent prayer, her lips seemed fashioned for songs of angels. And as he looked he thought of that mother whose firstling nestled in the straw of a manger, and of all madonnas who since her day have given to the world their enfleshed life and love.

A man looked upon a woman. To him her eyes were illumed with Corybantic fires, her lips seemed fashioned for yielding such kisses as Aspasia knew. And as he looked he thought of that alluring mistress who made of God's mightiest Nazarite a blinded slave grinding at the mill of Gaza amidst the taunts of them of Philistia, and of all those Lorelei of every age and clime whose love has palsied the thews of Anakim.

And each of the two men saw truly, and both were looking upon the same woman.

LAUGHTER NOR LOVE

By Hortense Flexner

THEY told me when you did not come
"Love is a little thing,"
And I believed them till I heard,
The first March red-breast sing.

They called me out to play with them,
Beneath the glad, Spring sun,
But O! the south-wind in the grass—
How could I dance and run?

They are so kind—they bring me gifts
To fill the hours with light,
Yet not their laughter nor their love,
Holds back the stars—and night.

THE LAUGH OF DOLORES

By Lilith Benda

—AND Dolores became a great artist, for her mother gave her care, training and the best of masters to develop her splendid voice; and her father taught her how to laugh.

Tears are the *raison d'être* of laughter, and laughter is the *raison d'être* of man. Of all things profound the most profound, of all things sad the saddest, of all things rare the rarest, and of all things alone the most alone, the gayety of the thinker is nothing but bravery of spirit. He smiles as he recognizes the evil of the world, and in the well-seasoned grin wrinkling his countenance is revealed all the sublime invincibility of the vanquished. With the genius he shares the hostility of the masses; for, like the genius, he may not be philistinized into ineptitude. And as the masses, with a faith founded upon the sanctity of tears, chose a Mother of Sorrows to solace them, so he, too, has his blessed madonna. But she is a madonna of joy, a madonna whose lips curl as did the nymphs of Dionysos when, after the world's première in souses, he awoke to their dulcet peals of mirth—mirth so skyey and blithesome that it banished all morning-after effects, and saved him from inaugurating, too, the first hangover. Our Lady of Laughter, she is called.

It was grief, none the less genuine for being shallow, and the heartache of a somewhat tedious, somewhat commonplace, but nevertheless broken woman, that saved Dolores from becoming Matilda. Her mother, carried away by high thoughts concerning the mission of woman, married with the deliberate intention of purging away the very foibles which had attracted her to her spouse. And when a good friend—after the manner of good friends in general—brought indisputable proof that these foibles, far from having been eradicated, were flourishing as soul-damning sins, immediately she visualized the tippling light-o'-loves so subtly hinted at as subsidiary divinities of the Moloch she had wedded, and New York a Gehenna in which her unborn child was to be made a holocaust to evil gods.

So one Utopia vanished away, but with the grim determination so often characteristic of frail, timid women, she planned for herself another one. Revelling in that ecstasy of sorrow so closely akin to joy, she left her husband, broke up her home, sailed for Europe, and settled in that part of the continent where the spirits of France and Italy blend sweetly, and emanate in the soft, eucalyptus-laden southern air. It was, however, the climate's salubrity rather than its fragrance, and refining influences for the expected baby betokened by the inhabitants' air of wholesome simplicity that made her choose this spot. And there Dolores opened her eyes to the world of ilex trees, shimmering sunlight, and orange orchards which frames the azure Mediterranean—Dolores who would have been Matilda but that her mother waived claims to a namesake in order to pay the tribute of a name of sorrow to the grief which ended with her daughter's birth.

Twenty-two years later, Dolores stood under the orange trees looking out over the sea. After a long season in Germany, she experienced each year a warm sense of comfort when her

mother brought her for a few months' rest to the blue hills and gnarled olive-trees of her childhood. She stood now, her hands clasped at the back of her neck, humming not entirely incongruously the Rhine-maiden motif to the nymph-suggesting Mediterranean. The world seemed good; she had worked hard and accomplished much; Hartmann, severest of masters, was pleased —had said, "In time you will be a Fremstad with a Lilli Lehmann voice; already they were hailing her as the coming Wagnerian soprano; next winter she was to make her American début with Elsa, and Elizabeth was soon to follow; she could not imagine why they looked askance and murmured "not yet" when she urged Isolde; but soon she would bring them to her way of thinking. . . . Isolde, Brünnhilde, Kundry, Sieglinde! They would be her great rôles! The world seemed good. . . .

To her mother, standing silent in the doorway, the world seemed good, too. With a feeling of humble pride in her heart she contemplated the splendid figure, the massive shoulders, the deep chest, long, strong throat, classic profile, deep-set cerulean eyes, and head of chestnut hair. Her Dolores was beautiful on the big scale—a Viking goddess—a heroine of the sagas! Perfectly equipped in every detail, a world-conquering career lay before her. And, best of all, she was pure, pure, not with the specious naiveté of some coy débutante, but with a virginal innocence incognizant of the very meaning of evil. She had never had a companion but who was an influence for good, never a book which might in the slightest degree sully her soul. And while in these rôles she was studying, there was a goodly smattering of the immoral, her upbringing had rendered her immune to its influence. She would give the world a virtuous Kundry, a chaste Isolde! The mother thrilled. Now, if only this irritating thing had not happened . . . mentally she ran over her carefully prepared speech, and then called softly:

"Dolores!"

The girl turned, smiling her glad, grave smile so suggestive of warm sunlight filtering through an early morning mist. As even in baby days, she had wept softly with barely audible sobs, so from earliest childhood she had never been known to laugh. But her smile was first cousin to a joyous peal; it was glee arrested in a primary stage and made static; it was an eager recognition of the merriness of a world which had as yet shown only its prosaic side.

"Dolores, dearest," her mother continued, "you have asked often but I have told you little of the strange things—things utterly incomprehensible to you, which forced me to leave America, and deprived you of knowing your father. In a little while we shall be sailing for New York to prepare for your début. I have just had a letter. It seems your father is a broken man, poor, a failure in business, living quietly by himself in some stupid little suburb—and lonely. They tell me he asks that you visit him for a few weeks early this autumn. And while the life he formerly led would have been a contaminating influence, while even now it might taint a weak soul, I feel that I have brought you up to be a pure, strong, unassailable woman. And while it may prove a trying experience to you, I feel that it is part of the duty I never flinch from to let you visit him for a little while, and permit him to meet, for the first time, the daughter he never deserved."

The smile had disappeared. With a very serious light in her eyes, the girl slowly nodded her head:

"That's so sweet of you, Mother, dear. I am curious to meet my father."

One afternoon some months later, Dolores kissed her mother, and left the exclusive apartment so carefully selected in a genteel neighborhood. Leaning back in a limousine of unobtrusive elegance, she gave up her thoughts to the father she was about to meet. What would he be like, this attractive, bad man her mother had so vaguely described? She pictured him to herself

as emaciated, with a skin like wrinkled ivory, a sardonic smile, eyes piercing as gimlets; he would have a low, penetrating voice, and an air of alluring wickedness about him. How eager she was to meet him! How slowly the machine seemed to crawl, and through what ugly streets! Rows upon rows of brownstone dwellings, all so distressingly alike! And then long stretches of tedious apartment houses with such homely little children playing in the streets, and such gauche men and women—and so many pianolas and victrolas all going fortissimo at presto speed! And then a section of little detached houses, neat but unattractive—and so many churches—and so many curious sign-boards reading, "Wouldn't You Rather Live Here Than In The Bronx? Easy payments. Terms like rent." Finally, before a little stuccoed cottage rendered a trifle more picturesque than the others by the late cosmos blooming so profusely in the garden, the automobile stopped. And Dolores alighted before her father's home.

A middle-aged woman, unkempt rather than slatternly, wiping the flour from her hands, and with "cook and general houseworker" written all over her, came to the door, and ushered the girl into a little room, unkempt rather than slatternly, too. There were many books lying all around, as well as cigar stumps and ashes; the pillows on the sofa were faded and disarranged; an odor of tobacco, and something strangely reminiscent of the burning spirits her mother had poured down her throat one wintry day, stole through the air: but there was a general air of cleanliness; a great bunch of wild asters stood on the table, and a cheering log fire burned brightly.

Then came a loud thumping on the stairs. Dolores, outwardly calm and grave, but with heart beating wildly, saw a pot-bellied little man stride into the room, and face her. For the first time in her life she looked upon her father.

He, too, was unkempt rather than slatternly. The first thing she noticed was that there were buttons missing from his waistcoat, that he wore suspenders, and that his necktie was all askew. He was far shorter than she, and of an excessive corpulence. His nose was red, redder even than his ruddy cheeks and shining bald pate. His eyes were as big and as blue as her own, and two rows of perfect teeth revealed themselves in the broad, succulent smile of welcome which seemed somehow to envelop her in an atmosphere of merry good-will. Already she felt at home.

With his hands in his pockets, he swayed slowly from heel to toe, looking her over:

"And so at last I look upon my Filia Dolorosa,"—she was struck by something peculiarly warm and sunny in his guttural tones—"you are beautiful, oh, flesh of my flesh! All the calm of innocence! All the fury of anaesthetized desire! The look of an unpaintable madonna revelling in the throes of an immaculate conception!"

And then the girl's eyes suddenly brightened. Between the two there flashed an instinctive recognition, a vibration proclaiming the meeting of kin with kin. For the first time in her life Dolores grinned.

"You are not the Governor—you are not Father—you are not Pater—nor Dad. You are a Papa man, Papa all through, the very essence of Papa. I am sure"—she lowered her voice, leaned over to straighten his tie, and—"I am sure that all your girls called you Papa, didn't they, now?" whispered the girl who had been so carefully brought up. For the first time in her life, Dolores chuckled.

Between them there were no progressive stages of acquaintanceship. At once they became comrades as if their lives had been spent together. At once the girl felt as if she had known always this rotund little man of the savoury smile. At once there was complete understanding, complete goodwill. All the years which had gone before seemed to Dolores but a hazy, half-forgotten prelude to this life in an at-

mosphere of cigar smoke, wine bottles, benign jollity, and comfortable, vulgar camaraderie. They never discussed the problems of life together save through the medium of merry stories. She spoke little of her voice and ambitions, and much of the music she was going to sing. He mentioned his failures, his disillusionments, his despair, only as so many passing jests.

"Life," he told her, "is a tremendous, side-splitting joke on ourselves. The man who tiptoes home from a liaison with the chambermaid a little earlier than usual for fear of being caught, tremulous, ashamed, in a cold sweat, and inventing a hundred plausible explanations for his immaculate wife's ears—only to surprise said wife in the coachman's—or, nowadays, is it the chauffeur's?—arms, does not appreciate the humor of a genuinely funny situation. If he laughs, it is only the laugh of a cynic, sardonic glee. So it is with life. We wed ourselves to the great things, swear allegiance to Honor, Mercy, Justice, Love. And then when we grow chilly in their rarefied atmosphere and sneak away stealthily for a jolly, miry little wallow on the side, we grow indignant upon returning to find Honor philandering with Shame, Mercy having an affair with Contumely, Justice with Meanness, Love with Ennui. We forget how we enjoyed our own little scrimmage in the mud, and wax wroth at poor Life for indulging in occasional amourettes. It is really very funny—reminds me of something which once happened to me. Listen, my child, to words of parental wisdom —and then followed a whispered discourse—there were many of these whispered discourses, topped at the end by a great, happy peal from Dolores' lungs—there were many such peals from the lungs of the girl who had never before known how to laugh.

In the mornings, if he awoke first, he would whistle the sword motif at her bedroom door, or, if she were the first, a mightly "Hojotoho!" resounded through the house, and a kimoned Brünnhilde brought steaming coffee to his bedside. She found that he knew the Ring score, and they would sit for hours humming it over together. Or else he leaned back among the sofa cushions, glass in hand, half-empty bottle beside him, and listened to the *lieder* he loved. At other times they read; a whole new world of literature was opening out before the girl's astonished eyes. But mostly, and what she enjoyed best, they talked. To see him sitting opposite her, the inevitable bottle before him, his nose growing ruddier every moment, his eyes brighter, his voice more mellow and urbane, his whole, round torso shaking in silent merriment as he told her his licentiously innocent tales, warmed her heart, and at times made tears not entirely of laughter rise to her eyes.

An unnatural relationship between parent and child? Something perverse about it? Decadent? Another depraved Decameron, these stories he told her as they sat for hours laughing together? Consider a moment. From Boccaccio to Schnitzler, expurgated editions of the great humorists have the souls wrenched from them, and become dull, lifeless things. Chopin, interpreted in terms of the second nocturne, remains Chopin still; but Gulliver's Travels, purged and purified, is stuff for nursery book-shelves, just as the advice-to-young-girls article of some masterly interpretress of Lady Macbeth, are but a flat-dweller's version of the rollicking baggage she generally is. Between these two, between the girl destined to be one of the first in her art, and her wine-bibbing father, there was more than the tie of blood. There was the bond of sanity—sanity, misnamed vulgarity by the vulgar—sanity, twin-brother of delicacy, the keystone of all greatness, the essence of all real romance!

They were very happy together—

Until Dane Parrish appeared.

"We are going to have a guest for a day or two," her father announced one morning, "young Dane Parrish. I told my friends to keep away while you

were here, so that I might have you all to myself during this first visit. But Dane is stopping in the city for only three days, on his way to Europe. And so, though he has become rather tiresome, for the sake of what he once was—"

"Dane Parish!" Dolores interrupted, her face enkindled with interest. "Oh, but Papa, he is a great poet. Mother wouldn't let me read all of his work—only a few things—but they were beautiful, every one of them."

He nodded his head: "Dane Parrish is thirty-two years old. About three years ago he should have joined some South American revolutionary party, and died a hero's death in espousal of a noble cause, or else developed picturesque hasty consumption, or else drowned while saving women and little children in a shipwreck. He is the Keats, Shelley, Chopin type, the sort of man fated to do his work while young, and then perish beautifully. He has outlived his talent. Once a dithyramb incarnate, he has become a stunted hyperbole. There is as vast a difference between youth and adolescence as between mellow old age and senility. Unless it be the senile woman of forty, there is nothing more disgusting than a man adolescent at thirty-two; he is fruit rotted before it is ripe. But, then, Dane has an Apollo Belvedere face, and the proverbial way with women. They gaze into his lovely eyes, listen to his glorious voice, and swallow as nectar the egregious banalities he gives utterance to. They all like him. Perhaps you, too, will."

Love at first sight is a premise requisite to the romance, all the primary stages of which must be crowded into seventy-two hours. When Dolores caught her first glimpse of the Byronic profile crowned with ambrosial curls, she thrilled: when Parrish looked for the first time into her great, blue eyes, the polite ineptitudes he uttered came in a slightly tremulous voice. Through their first dinner the two sat, speechless. It was rather a silent affair, that dinner. Dolores noticed that after one or two ineffectual attempts at conversation, her father, too, became taciturn, looking as gloomy as it was possible for him to look, and with his wine-glass standing untouched before him—but soon she forgot all about him. Despite her solemn demeanor, there was something mighty, disturbing, and very pleasant tugging at her heart. What the poet said, his thoughts, his ideas, his calibre, all sank into insignificance before the charm of his personality, and allure of his good looks. Through that dinner, through the evening, through most of the night and all of the next day, she was the prey of conflicting emotions, antagonistic ideas. One moment she heard the patter of tiny feet, and the laughter of little children; the next came visions of fierce, ineluctable, lawless love of balmy evenings, of nightingale's songs. One moment came thoughts of an affection staunch, loyal, enduring, eternal; and the next a dream of romance, by its very nature ephemeral, and ineffably sweet in its evanescence. To throw away a great career for love! There was something splendid in the idea. Or else, to continue with her art, and to be able always to return from the stress of it to a peaceful home, rollicking little children, and a husband who loved her! Or, yet again, to make of love a light, agreeable background for her work, to start upon a long series of gay amourettes—and to start quickly!

Such were the thoughts, vague, indeterminate, which chased each other through her brain. Nothing seemed real, neither the face of her potential lover, nor her father's almost surly air, nor her very self, even. Nothing seemed real until that evening, when they sat, the two of them, on the little front porch, with a crescent moon smiling placidly upon them, and she felt for the first time a masculine arm encircle her, and masculine lips cling closely to hers. All a-quiver, half laughing, half weeping, tremulous with happiness, she lay back in her lover's arms, millions of miles away. And the street noises, the steady strum of the Memphis Blues

played on a pianola, even the very words he was whispering, were indistinguishable to her.

Presently, however, she heard his importunate "Will you, sweet, will you?" And she looked up, listening. He spoke in a sort of half chant. His voice was limpid and low. There were cadences in it—a lilting rhythm. All at once it struck her that there was a certain metre to it, that it sounded like a recitation of poetry. Unconsciously she let her fingers tap out the dactyls, spondees, and anapests. And she listened eagerly, critically, now, to what he was saying:

"Sail with me|, dear one, for | Naples. Ve|suvius|, glum in the | distance|, waits for a | love unpo | lluted | by the taint | of the world. | Bay lying | sunkissed be|fore us| ! Moonlight and | bird music | joyous! | And our bliss!"—

"And the fleas!" she interrupted, loudly.

Then it came!

First a preliminary chuckle, then a choking effort at control, and then a colossal burst of merriment! A brobdingnagian peal of mirth! A great, round belly-ful of laughter! A titanic explosion of glee! Gross, gladsome, elemental, common as mud, but Promethean! And dying away slowly, intensifying as it diminished, until when once more all was silence, the soul of it seemed still to linger in the atmosphere like some eternal, cosmic force!

Dolores turned to Parrish. His face had become stony with astonishment, disgust, hurt pride. The girl reddened to her ears as she looked at him, and spoke in a low voice:

"I'm most awfully sorry, Dane. I'm horribly ashamed. It was odiously unmannerly of me—unpardonable. But," her lips twitched again, "it struck me as so funny, and when you were in the midst of all those exquisite things, something just made me break in with the fleas. Without them it would have been a—a stunted hyperbole! Of course, you don't understand. I'll try to explain. You see, it was all so crazily like a story Papa—"

The poet gave vent to an unpoetic sniff: "Your father—"

But she interrupted him: "Malign him not, Dane. My Papa is my god—and this *was* a funny story. You see, he had a girl once long ago, a ravishingly lovely, wildly romantic girl. She insisted upon a wonderful voyage to Naples, and a grande passion in a villa on the outskirting hills overlooking the bay. Papa was delighted at first. She was excessively good to look upon, you understand, rather given to rhapsodizing and all that, but he thought it would wear away after a while. At first everything was lovely, but by degrees it became unbearable—a steady diet of high thoughts, elevated sentiments, rarefied emotions, love among the heights and ultra-refined sin! Papa began to despair, to grow thin. He was in anguish! But one thing saved him. The beautiful villa was infested with fleas! They made life worth living for him. They were the one reminder of a world unpurified by empyreal life, the one tangible, visible proof that all was not altitudes! He grew to love them, to cherish them as brothers, to—oh, I can't do justice to it, but you realize, don't you, that the story has infinite possibilities? And to hear Papa tell it! Well, dear boy, when you were speaking of a love unpolluted by the taint of the world, a hideous fear swept over me that you might choose a villa destitute of fleas! I should have been so lonely! I should have stifled! And then, after I'd spoken, it struck me as gorgeously ridiculous that I, who'd been dreaming the most saccharine of day dreams, should think of such a thing. I laughed at myself. It was a joke on me, don't you see? Oh, I know I'm making a mess of this explanation, but try to understand. I'm afraid we have a vulgar streak, Papa and I—I'm afraid we like to pig it once in a while—I'm afraid we're just the least bit fleasy, we two."

The poet spoke in funereal tones: "It's a crying shame! Your father has spoilt you, Dolores, hardened you, cheapened you for art, coarsened you for love, sullied your purity, tarnished

your innocence with his blatant vulgarity!"

Turning away from him, she smiled quietly: "I wonder, Dane—I wonder —somehow I feel that he's helped me with my work more than years of study would have done. And as for love—well, at any rate, he's taught me the difference between romance and grandes passions, and that's a lot. But what is the use of discussing it? Already, I am a lost illusion, common as a pig-sty, eh? Shockingly canaille? Well, dear boy, sail for Naples, and when you are settled in that villa overlooking the magic bay, thank your gods that you found me out before toting me all the way there with you!"

The dawn was not far away when Dolores awoke from her reverie and tip-toed into the house. She stole into the kitchen first, then mounted the stairs, and entered her father's room. The little man, snoring slightly, was stretched out in bed with the book he had been reading lying, open, on his breast. He looked rather worn, rather sad, rather beaten. There was something about him, wistful and wan, which reminded her of a little child, and made her bend tenderly over him, as she sang, softly:

"Vater! Vater!
Sage, was ist dir?
Was erschreck'st du mit Sorge dein Kind!
Vertraue mir:
ich bin dir treu;
sieh', Brünnhilde bittet!"

Slowly his lips parted. The closed eyes seemed to twinkle. And he sought lazily for her hand, the while answering in guttural tones:

"Muss ich verlieren
dich, die ich liebe
du lachende Lust meines Auges."

She threw her arms around him: "Indeed you won't lose me, Papa mine. I've resisted the lure of the poet. He has gone in high dudgeon, poor dear, unable to spend another night in this gross atmosphere. He has gone, portmanteau and all, to write lyrics on the meretriciousness of woman."

He heaved a deep sigh of relief: "And to think that at my age I should have been worrying my head over the fate of a headstrong young hussy!" His eyes closed sleepily. He was beginning again to snore. Impatiently, the girl tugged at his arm, and held before him the bottle she had brought from the kitchen.

"Johannesberger Schloss, vintage of—"

But at the magic words he sprang up like a flash! And with the greedy, amorous embrace in which Paris enveloped his Helen, in which Shylock clutched his gold, in which Narcissus sought to clasp his shadow, in which Salome seized the baptist's head, he gripped the cold bottle!

"Wine, woman, and wassail!" he shouted, "my Dolores, where are the glasses?"

In reverential silence they slowly sipped the first drops of molten amber—

—and Dolores became a great artist, for her mother gave her care, training, and the best of masters to develop her splendid voice; and her father taught her how to laugh.

TO have a wooden head is less a misfortune to an actor than to have a wooden leg.

THE THINGS WE SWEAR BY

By John W. Mason, Jr.

THEY were sitting on the old rustic bench at the edge of the cliff. The music from the orchestra at the little summer hotel came to them faintly, blending with the noise of the river as it dashed among the rocks in the forest five hundred feet below them. The August moon shone over all.

"I will love you as long as the river flows," he swore.

"And I will love you as long as the forests stand," she vowed.

* * *

Three years have passed. Again come the same two; the same August moon; the same rustic bench. The orchestra is playing at the hotel.

"What a happy, glorious summer that was we spent here three seasons ago," she says.

"The happiest, I think, that I have ever known," he replies.

They look down from the cliff as they had done before. A great corporation has erected a large dam that has changed the once wildly rushing river to a placid lake. The lumbermen have come through and cut away the forests.

As if caught by a common rush of memories, they both laugh.

"Our vows, you remember them?" he asks.

"Yes," she answers.

"How little one really knows of the things by which one swears," he mused. "If our love had been no more lasting than the things we swore it by, we would not now be here on our honeymoon."

TO ONE OLDER

By Harold Hersey

THE broken instrument of love is still;
Our passions swept across its strings and went
Like some god knowing but its riotous will,
Drunk with the wine of Love's mad merriment.

The instrument grew hungry for the touch
Of your warm fingers on its rusting wires
And found our love a music granting much
Yet leaving one grown weary with desires.

TWO ON A VERANDAH

By G. Vere Tyler

SHE had been on deck for thirty years. Winter saw her in the corridors of hotels. Summer saw her on hotel verandahs. Much of her life had been spent sitting at restaurant tables opposite men. If put in line these men at whose hands she had fed would have formed a small regiment. In consequence of this vanished army she was fifty pounds over weight. Nevertheless, in her way, she was still beautiful. For not only was she an adept in the use of hair stains and cosmetics, but her large, dark, curious, furtive eyes glowed with magnetic fires. The latest fads and follies of fashion were her religion. She carried around with her a much harnessed brindle pup of the pop-eyed order. His trappings announced her comings and goings.

Gay and tragic by turns hers had been a desperately sensational life. She had mounted to madly exhilarating heights, and she had descended to madly humiliating depths. She had feasted and she had gone hungry. She had dwelt in palatial quarters, and icy hall bedrooms. She had dressed elaborately, and known trying periods of shabbiness. She had run up large bills, and been many times sued. Her dressmaker and her tailor were both suing her now, and her maid was in New York trying to get an additional loan on some pawn tickets. If she failed, what then? A sudden thought shocked her. They were in the girl's name and she might depart with them? She had already stolen several and she wasn't in the position to say anything. Of late she had been having little shudders at the memories of recent narrow escapes and the thought of what might happen. She experienced a very pronounced one now. It caused her to put her hand over her heart. As she did so she remarked inwardly that she had been turning some close corners and her eyes took on something of the look of the brindle pup. They bulged.

Momentarily reckless of appearances she pushed her hair back and got up and took another chair. She was thinking. Whenever she thought it was to wonder to whom she could turn. Another queer feeling attacked her, followed this time by a slight dizziness. The last time she had turned to some one, help had been extended without equivalent. Also, she had been called "old girl," and told how many years he had known her, and that every added day must seem to her a catastrophe. She remembered how she had walked away that day clutching the small "loan" in her hand, feeling as if she were drunk and trying to smile it off. She also remembered how that sentence had been repeating itself in her brain ever since. It was like the refrain of a popular song that every one was singing. She could hear it now.

In trying to escape it, she fell to thinking of times when money was plentiful—as, she used to call it, just lying around. She had to fight the queer feeling that took the form of the pricking of needles. Somebody had told her it was all over with a woman when she began to think of her past triumphs. She had been doing that a good deal of late, bragging to herself and others. She must stop it!

She nervously fingered her hair and took the seat she had vacated. Her position was rather soldier-like, as

though she were contemplating a move, so the brindle pup jumped about and barked once or twice. She jerked on his rein and told him to keep quiet! Couldn't he see that she was thinking? The past! What good was it anyway? It was over, *over!* And she pushed the dog who was whining and climbing against her knees away from her. The *present* was what concerned her—to-day and the next week. The present and the *future!* The first she thought, almost laughingly, might be likened to a hungry lion ready to devour her. And she had only to try to look ahead to see a black pit for her to fall in. She became quite nervous. It was good she wasn't in her room; or she might have one of those terrible crying spells she had been having of late that the doctor had given her tablets for, and that hadn't done her any good. That doctor! He was a fool! She could see herself paying *his* bill!

A party of young girls showily costumed and accompanied by what she styled "fellows who looked like all kinds of money" whizzed by in an auto. She wanted to get up and scream something at them. She didn't exactly admit that it was a curse, but she did admit that while she didn't know why, she felt murder in her heart. Men and money! Those were the two big Ms! It hadn't taken her long to find that out. And how many men with money she had known! She wondered what had become of them all. Everybody that came her way of late had gone broke. She experienced a kind of hatred of men, a certain vicious contempt. She would like to tell those girls a few of *her* experiences. Men! A world of scorn swept through her. They were all alike. Adoring and generous in the beginning; cruel and stingy in the end. She felt a certain kind of sardonic satisfaction in the thought that those girls whizzing by so airily would find out. She was not the only one!

And yet she mustn't send out damaging thought currents! A man was a man after all. Suffragettes could prate as they liked, but no matter how you might hate them, the male creature was powerful—*powerful!* And she repeated the word with violent mental emphasis. They made the money! The concession was due to the approach of a certain one she had been observing about the hotel for several days. He had to pass her to enter the door. The dog barked and she slapped him. She would *kill* Teddy some day! When the man reached her she offered him her eyes. He caught the glance but didn't return it. She flushed a little. She would like to tell his highness who she was! How many men had been proud—

People were going in to dinner. The orchestra was playing a divine selection —one of her favorites, and lights were beginning to flash everywhere about her as far as she could see. God, what a magic hour and what good times were going on in the world! She seemed to see ten thousand women getting ready for the evening—ten thousand pairs of bared shoulders and shining heads before mirrors. Well, and she shrugged, they were right. That was what every woman *should* do: keep up and grab at what this old world had to give. . . .

"Keep it up, girls," she mentally admonished, "and get all that's coming to you while you can!"

She fell to thinking of men again; certain men, and for a moment her experienced face looked curiously hideous. As she quickly changed her position, however, it regained its rather brazen calm and weather-beaten beauty.

"Ah!" and she stretched herself, she knew what was the matter with her! A couple of good Martinis and a pint of champagne with her dinner would fix her! Never mind those unpaid café checks; she would just walk in boldly and sign. To-morrow with what Arline got she could settle up. The bill for the room could wait. *She* needed the money more than the hotel: she would teach that impudent clerk a lesson!

She got up and with the dog's trappings jingling as she walked, went to her room, taking a circuitous route to avoid the "impudent" clerk, but meeting him face to face when she got out of the

elevator. The unexpected encounter caused every thing to turn black before her a moment, and when she found herself on the inside of her room, without knowing how she got there, she stood peering ahead of her like the captain of a ship entering dangerous waters. Then she walked over to the mirror and bending forward looked a full five minutes at herself. The fires of her eyes seemed to fascinate her. . . . It was as though they represented a last hope that she was praying to. . . .

Finally she turned and the pathos in the eyes she had prayed to changed to a kind of torture.

"I've got to get my nerve up!" she declared rather aimlessly. "I wonder," and she brightened in a half-hearted way, "if I dare risk it?"

She walked hurriedly to the bell and rang.

When the page appeared she smiled cheerfully at him and spoke of his curly hair.

"Bring me up four Martinis," she then said, "I am expecting some lady friends."

At the end of five minutes' anxious waiting the page returned.

"No more charges on 128," he said flippantly.

To be spared his contempt she gave him, from her ornate bag, her last fifteen cents. . . .

II

She had been on deck for thirty years. Winter saw her in her comfortable suburban home. Summer saw her for two short weeks on hotel verandahs. Much of her time had been spent seated at her own table opposite one man. He supplied the table bounteously. She ate bountifully and was in consequence fifty pounds over weight. In spite of marks and ravages of a monotonous existence she was in her way still beautiful. Her hair thickly sprinkled with grey was arranged, as it had ever been since girlhood, without aid of puff or curl. She used no cosmetics. The word fashion she had never felt applied to her. Her hats might vary slightly with the passages of time. Apparently her dresses conformed to a mode long since decided upon. The bodices were tight; the skirt of a moderate width. Everything she wore appeared to be a little short waisted. It was as though she considered it indelicate not to be girded in her clothes. She had a married daughter and a little grandchild. The grandchild lived with her, and his laughter or tears announced her comings and goings.

Hers had been an even and uneventful life. She had attended church and sewing societies. She had never known a day of anxiety concerning her present, or a doubt about her future. The material conditions under which she existed were as fixed as the stars. She had no conception of a day passed without three solid square meals. She had heard of hunger as she had heard of Robert Browning. Neither had any significance to her. The word hall bedroom sounded to her like the title of a magazine story. Imaginary characters lived in them. She had inherited her home and paid cash for every purchase she had ever made. There were unvirtuous women and those who contracted bills somewhere in the world, or she had heard so. She did the same things every day as the hands of a clock move around so many times pointing to so many hours. She scorned personal service and knew neither the insolence nor thefts of maids. She was given to neither heart palpitations nor dizziness of vision. Her pulses beat with the regularity of a clock pendulum and her vision was perfectly clear and even. If an automobile containing a merry party whizzed by they received no more comment on her part than a cart load of watermelons that might follow. It was simply the street and things went by. Passing girls evoked in her no envy; young men had never occupied her mind. She had been pretty; a man had seen her in the home she was to inherit, and asked her to marry him. She had married him.

She had analysed neither life nor marriage. She had just gone on living. She had never been unhappy. She never expected to be unhappy. She too, saw the people going to dinner, heard the music, and saw the lights flashing. Last night they had roast beef; to-night they would have roast lamb—roast lamb and vegetables. She never looked over the bill of fare. She knew there was vanilla ice cream.

She took up her hand-bag that contained several fifty-dollar bills and went up to her room in perfect ease and comfort to smooth her hair before descending to the dining-room. She knew that her husband would be waiting for her in the rotunda at six-thirty. She experienced no fears as to his not being there. Not one thought of other women crossed her mind. It never occurred to her to contemplate a "good time." She saw people drinking wine as she saw the stars shining in the sky. With perfect composure she walked over, rang the bell, and when the page appeared told him to send up the sterilized water that had been ordered. When the boy brought it, she did not give him a tip. . . .

Which woman was to be envied?

THE PHILOSOPHER

By Alys Francis

"THE spirit of youth and beauty," thought the Philosopher, gazing at her from his seat of vantage in the subway. "How fresh! how fair! How noble the white brow, untouched by worldly care! How golden the clouds of her fine-spun hair! And the peachy bloom on her satin-smooth skin. What dream is mirrored in the pellucid depths of those grey eyes? For what vision are those sweet, half-parted lips waiting? So might Joan d'Arc gaze at the vision of triumphant angels. Ah, the golden dreams, the noble aspirations, the idealism of youth, so soon to be bruised by the careless world!"

Thought she: "Only twenty-nine-fifty, and all silk. It was some bargain. Jim likes yellow, too. Gee, if I can't hook him in that, I'll be one boob."

The Philosopher's gaze roved to the man, who had thrown aside his *Post* and was plunged in thought. "The modern Atlas, shouldering the world of finance," mused the Philosopher. "The forty-year-old Midas whose touch has made millions for one, has bankrupted another. What scheme is being plotted behind those steely eyes that will influence worldwide the marts of trade? What weighty problem is knotting that furrowed brow? Ah, the strength, the power of these captains of finance, beside which the monarch's sceptre seems impotent and puny."

Thought he: "Two steps forward, glide, hop to the side, and dip—no hesitate. I'm getting rusty on these new dances. Have to take some lessons from that little blonde who tangoes at Maurenzi's."

And complacently the Philosopher continued his study of human nature.

MR. LORELEI*

A FOLK COMEDY

By Paul Armstrong

CHARACTERS

HELEN NELSON, *a married woman of 32.*
JENNIE NELSON, *her young sister-in-law.*
PERCY W. HICKS, JR.

SCENE: *The living-room in Helen's house.* TIME: *The present.*

THE room is typical of the newer, better sort of dwelling in a small American city, say, in Ohio, Nebraska or Illinois. It shows easy means, a desire for comfort and the rudiments of good taste. The walls are papered in dark green and on the floor there is a large rug, frankly made in New Jersey, of the same color. In the center a good-sized table in the mission style, with a cover of some dark, heavy fabric. On it the Ladies' Home Journal, the Saturday Evening Post, Vogue, the Delineator and a few other magazines. A book or two; the latest, perhaps, by Robert W. Chambers and H. G. Wells. Above the table, a hanging lamp-shade of the so-called dome species in rather gaudy stained-glass. On the wall are the usual pictures: the Colosseum at Rome, something by Burne-Jones, a vague etching or two, a banal child's head, several framed photographs, a calendar. To the left there is a fireplace with a gas-log, and before it stand two huge easy chairs. In one of the far corners is a sewing machine. A cat drowses in front of the fire. It is half-past nine of a bright winter morning.

As the curtain rises Jennie is discovered standing by the table. She is in what appears to be a mid-Western attempt at a riding habit and has evidently just come in. As she removes her gauntlets Helen enters. Helen is in a very modest but becoming house frock and wears a large kitchen apron. She is an excellent specimen of the middle-class American wife and mother, healthy, clean-looking, efficient. No beauty, she yet shows more than one sign that she must have been decidedly attractive as a girl. Jennie is ten years younger—slim, trig, even a bit dashing. A pretty wench, and not unaware of it.

HELEN:

What! Back already?

JENNIE:

Yes; the poor horse cast a shoe and I had to walk him back.

HELEN:

Well, to-morrow is another day. Just so my mother sees you before you go home. Living out there in the country, she's always crazy for visitors. And particularly you.

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JENNIE:

(*Laughing.*)
We're a mutual admiration society. I think she's simply grand. And I see her daughter is as full of energy as she is. You seem——

HELEN:

Yes; husband off to business, children off to school—and the cook singing in the kitchen. Can't you hear her? That's the way to run a house!

JENNIE:

Helen, I often wonder how you do it.

HELEN:

It's simple: I don't take things too seriously—not even myself.

JENNIE:

And the way you get on with Frank! Mother and Lillie often wonder about it. When he was home he was forever complaining about this or that. But now he seems to be not only happy, but tickled half to death.

HELEN:

(*Obviously pleased.*)
Well, I remember things.

JENNIE:

Remember things?

HELEN:

Yes. That's the way to get on with anybody—husband, children, servants or anyone. Don't forget the little things.

JENNIE:

(*Suddenly, in consternation.*)
Good heavens!

HELEN:

(*Laughing.*)
Well, what have you forgotten now?

JENNIE:

A telegram.

HELEN:

A telegram? For whom? For Frank?

JENNIE:

No; for you.
(*She picks up one of the books on the table and begins turning its pages rapidly.*)
It came yesterday afternoon while you were downtown. I took it from the boy and then stuck it in one of these books, thinking to give it to you when you got back. But then I went off to the Hendersons' for supper—and clean forgot it.

HELEN:

You put it in a book, did you? And now you can't find the book?
(*Chuckling.*)
You're a bright sister-in-law! Don't get married, Jennie, ever. Don't you know that for just that you'd be at a husband's mercy for twenty years. Once a year he would throw it up to you. "Do you remember the day you hid a telegram in a book and it couldn't be found for three days?"

JENNIE:

(*Shakes a yellow envelope out of one of the books.*)
Here it is now!
(*Hands it to Helen.*)

HELEN:

Thanks. But do you realize what a man would think of a trick like hiding a telegram?

JENNIE:

Yes, yes—but open it!

HELEN:

He would never forget it—never!

JENNIE:

Guilty, your honor! But stop your preaching and open your telegram. It may——

HELEN:

Do you know what a man would think of that squirrel stuff?

JENNIE:

(*Collapses into a chair.*)
Yes, yes.

HELEN:

(*Opens the envelope with a hairpin, draws out the telegram and reads.*)
"Must see you to-morrow morning ten o'clock alone. Percy W. Hicks, Jr."

JENNIE:

What's that?

HELEN:

(*Coming nearer, reads again.*)
"Must see you to-morrow morning ten o'clock alone. Percy W. Hicks, Jr." Ten o'clock. Alone.

JENNIE:

Who the devil is Percy W. Hicks, Jr.?

HELEN:

(*Plainly puzzled.*)
The Lord knows! Percy? Percy? Now who can Percy be?

JENNIE:

(*With a sudden inspiration.*)
Where is it from?

HELEN:

(*Looks at the sheet again.*)
From Stillwater. Do I know a Percy in Stillwater?
(*At last it dawns on her.*)
Well, what do you think of that? It's from dear old Percy Hicks of Stillwater!

JENNIE:

(*Ironically.*)
So it appears. But who *is* Percy Hicks of Stillwater?

HELEN:

(*Gaily, her finger on her lip.*)
Sh-h-h! It's a secret. Percy is one of my old beaux. You see, when I was about seventeen or so I spent a month in Stillwater visiting my father's cousin's people. They were mainly old folks and I got lonely. Well, Jennie, you know what a girl does when she gets lonely.

JENNIE:

Yes; she flirts.

HELEN:

You guessed it. So I flirted with this Percy. He was the beau of the town. All the girls were after him. I do believe we were engaged!

JENNIE:

(*Laughingly.*)
Horrors!

HELEN:

A fact! I know he kissed me by the old ruined mill, and said he was sorry for me.

JENNIE:

Sorry? Why sorry?

HELEN:

Because I loved him so deeply, so terribly.

JENNIE:

What a tragedy!

HELEN:

Yes; Percy is coming back now. I begin to remember him very well. I believe he was the first to show me how silly a man could be. Do you know, Jennie, that donkey believed that once *he* had kissed a girl her whole life was changed from that minute.

JENNIE:

What a fool!

HELEN:

Well, most of them think the same thing. One kiss by the old ruined mill —and you are settled forever.

JENNIE:

Surely not!

HELEN:

Listen to what I tell you! Do you know your big brother has confessed to me that fully twenty hearts went bang! when he married me? And every time he tells about it he thinks of a couple more.

JENNIE:

(*Enchanted by the scandal.*)
Can it be that *all* men are that silly?

HELEN:

Go on with you! Most of them are much worse.

(*With proud proprietorship.*)

Your brother is above the average. But wait till you meet this Percy Hicks. He is even worse than most. I bet a pin he tries to sympathize with me.

JENNIE:

What! And you with a husband, two children and a three-story house?

HELEN:

(*Melodramatically.*)

Nothing can change the dent made in my poor heart at the old ruined mill! Ten long years!

(*A clock in the next room begins to strike. The two pause and count the ten strokes.*)

JENNIE:

Ten o'clock! And there goes the door-bell.

(*The dutiful stagehand rings the door-bell promptly and Helen goes to the door.*)

HELEN:

There he is! Always punctual!

(*She opens the door, which gives from the veranda directly into the living-room. As she steps back Percy W. Hicks, Jr., enters. Percy is a tall, slim man of about thirty-six or seven, with dark hair that is vaguely curly and a dark, drooping moustache. He might be an undertaker, a jeweler, a small-town station-master, an osteopath, a teacher in a business college, a druggist, a Y.M.C.A. secretary or a reform member of the Legislature. His overcoat, a light tan in color, is jauntily thrown back, revealing a gaudy fraternal order pin in his left lapel—a pin composed of a brass moose head with garnets for eyes. His four-in-hand necktie is of cerise satin and is speared with a pin even gaudier. He carries a bowler hat in his left hand, held bottom upward, and from it peep the fingers of a pair of red dog-skin gloves. Percy is a careful and even fastidious dresser. He was the first man in Stillwater to wear a green velvet hat, and in the days of polychrome waistcoats he was as gorgeous as a circus horse. One notices in his attire, at the moment, a touch of the subdued. He is on solemn business and has garbed himself accordingly.*)

PERCY:

(*With a dramatic gesture.*)

Hélène!

(*He essays what he regards as the French pronunciation of the name, but in reality it is only the Stillwater pronunciation, to wit,* Hel-*een. He repeats it twice more, with gradual diminuendo.*)

HELEN:

(*Struggling with a desire to yell.*)

Why, Percy!

PERCY:

(*He takes her hand, and, holding it tenderly, looks into her eyes.*)

I think I understand what it means to you to see me again. You have made the best of your life?

HELEN:

(*Unable to bear any more of this unsupported, she turns to Jennie, who has been standing by the table.*)

This is my sister, Percy. This is Mr. Hicks, Jennie.

(*Percy is obviously charmed by Jennie's riding habit, and she notices his glance at it.*)

JENNIE:

(*Brightly.*)

You thought I was a jockey?

PERCY:

(*Quite seriously.*)

No, no. I didn't think at all. My mind was (*glancing tenderly toward Helen*) all for her.

HELEN:

(*To make conversation.*)

Mr. Hicks is from Stillwater.

JENNIE:

Oh, yes; Stillwater. And how has the weather been over there?

PERCY:

(*Vaguely.*)
The weather?

HELEN:

(*To the rescue.*)
Tell me, how have *you* been, Percy?

PERCY:

Oh, very well, thank you.
(*Importantly.*)
I am now the local manager of the Imperial Shoe Company.

HELEN:

What! The head man in Stillwater?

PERCY:

Yes, the manager.

HELEN:

Just think of that! Jennie, I must tell you more about Mr. Hicks.

JENNIE:

Yes, do.

HELEN:

Won't you sit down, Percy.
(*He takes a seat beside the table, on the side nearest the fireplace. Helen, at first, is seated at the opposite side. Jennie moves about behind the table.*)
Well, you can see for yourself that he is good-looking.

JENNIE:

Surely I am not blind

HELEN:

And *then,* of course, he was in his prime.

JENNIE:

When?

HELEN:

The summer I was in Stillwater. The time I fell in love with him.
(*She rises, passes around the table and takes her station behind Percy's chair. He sits up stiffly. Her hands are on the back of the chair, almost around his neck.*)

HELEN:

Oh, that month in Stillwater! What a wonderful time it was!

PERCY:

(*Affably.*)
Ah, yes, a time to be remembered.

HELEN:

There was not a girl in that town, Jennie, who wasn't jealous of me.

JENNIE:

Tell us of them, Mr. Hicks.

HELEN:

But there were so many!

(*Percy makes a gesture of protest, but Jennie insists.*)

JENNIE:

Oh, just a few. Just one or two.

HELEN:

I can still remember the story of the blacksmith's daughter. . .

PERCY:

Yes, yes, the blacksmith's daughter. Poor thing!

JENNIE:

What happened to her?

HELEN:

It was terrible.

JENNIE:

Really!

HELEN:

Yes, she loved Mr. Hicks. Didn't she Percy?

PERCY:

(*Modestly.*)
I suppose we must say so.

HELEN:

And you couldn't love her?

PERCY:

I was sorry.

JENNIE:

And what happened?

HELEN:

She eloped (*a pause*) with a drummer. Didn't she, Percy?

PERCY:

Yes. An idiot who peddled canned goods.

JENNIE:

Then she's happy at last?

PERCY:

Happy? What makes you think so?

HELEN:

Are you forgetting that she lost Percy?

JENNIE:

The poor thing!

HELEN:

To think what the life of a canned-goods drummer must be!

JENNIE:

A living death.

PERCY:

(*Tragically.*)
Since the day she went away with that man there has been the silence of the grave. I have not even written to her.

HELEN:

And I suppose there have been others.

JENNIE:

What! Another tragedy!

PERCY:

Don't speak of the last few years.

HELEN:

Why not?

PERCY:

(*He hesitates, but finally decides to tell.*)
Among them there has been one woman, a woman I never encouraged, who has made my life miserable.

HELEN:

Tell us of her.

PERCY:

She is a married woman.

HELEN:

Percy!

PERCY:

I know it sounds scoundrelly, but believe me when I tell you that I have never even given her a kiss.

JENNIE:

What! Not one?

PERCY:

Not a single one.

HELEN:

And still she is madly in love with you?

PERCY:

Yes, she dotes on me. She's the undertaker's wife.

JENNIE:

How tragic!

HELEN:

How gruesome!

PERCY:

Yes, an awful nuisance. She wants me to elope with her.

HELEN:

Are you sure?

PERCY:

No less than fifteen times she has suggested it.

HELEN:

But has she said so in so many words?

PERCY:

Often. Once she drove up to my house in the middle of the night—driving her husband's best pair of hack horses—and called me out.

JENNIE:

How terrible!

PERCY:

Yes, I can never forget that voice, calling, calling in the night.

HELEN:

And she persists in her mad infatuation?

PERCY:

No; at last she understands.

JENNIE:

How did you manage it?

PERCY:

I told her husband.

(*So far Helen and Jennie have managed to control their mirth, but at this Jennie is forced to rush from the room. Percy, however, does not seem to notice her hasty exit.*)

HELEN:

Ah, that was noble of you.

PERCY:

He wouldn't believe it, poor fool, and ordered me from his funeral parlor. He said she was stringing me, joking. You know how much she was joking.

HELEN:

Only too well. But I'd like to know her.

PERCY:

Don't, Hel-*een!* Don't.

HELEN:

What do you mean?

PERCY:

Don't make my task the harder.

HELEN:

What task?

PERCY:

Don't you know why I am here?

HELEN:

No, of course not.

PERCY:

You got my telegram?

HELEN:

Yes.

(*Jennie has come back.*)

PERCY:

Did you note what I asked?

HELEN:

You asked to see me.

PERCY:

To see you alone.

HELEN:

Oh, but Jennie doesn't count. Jennie knows all my secrets.

PERCY:

Including *our* secret?

HELEN:

Oh, of course.

PERCY:

Very well. Perhaps it is best for both of us that she should stay.

HELEN:

And now?

PERCY:

I have come to do what no man should ever do. It may be cruel, but—

(*He seizes Helen's hand.*)

Promise that you will be brave.

HELEN:

I will be brave.

PERCY:

As I say, no man has a right to come into a woman's life as I am coming into yours, bringing back the dream of other days.

HELEN:

And opening old wounds. Have you thought of that?

PERCY:

Yes, God forgive me, I have thought of it all. And I knew how it would be.

HELEN:

And yet you came?

PERCY:

I was helpless, Hel-*een.*

HELEN:

Helpless?

JENNIE:

Surely *you* are never helpless.

PERCY:

I can understand you thinking that, but where a woman's life happiness is concerned I would do anything, risk all, take the desperate hazard—

HELEN:

(*Dramatically.*)
There is some other woman in your life, Percy. I can see it plainly. Who is she? Tell me!

PERCY:

(*After a moment's hesitation.*)
Violet Gaffney! Miss Violet Gaffney!

HELEN:

Miss Violet Gaffney!

PERCY:

Yes, Miss Violet Gaffney.

HELEN:

Where is she?

PERCY:

In Stillwater. She is the cashier of the Just-a-Bite Restaurant, right across from the Imperial shoe store.

HELEN:

Where she can always see you.

JENNIE:

Control yourself, Helen.

PERCY:

Tears won't move me: you may as well know the truth. I am engaged to Miss Violet Gaffney.
(*Both gasp and turn away.*)

HELEN:

Oh!

JENNIE:

Goodness!

PERCY:

(*Relentlessly.*)
Yes, I am engaged to Miss Violet Gaffney. And she has demanded something of me—something I gave to you that day I kissed you by the old mill. I know what it means to give back something you have treasured for years. I know what it means to a refined woman. But I must have it!

HELEN:

Well, what was it?

JENNIE:

Yes, what is she to give back?

PERCY:

(*Significantly.*)
She knows!

HELEN:

(*Plainly puzzled.*)
On my word I don't.

PERCY:

(*Sentimentally.*)
The glowing embers! How often, in my mind's eyes, have I seen her fondling it with tear-dimmed eyes, recalling again that beautiful moment by the old mill.

JENNIE:

But what is it? What did you give her beside that kiss?

PERCY:

It was a ring, a cameo ring, a red cameo ring, a large red cameo ring.

JENNIE:

What? You want the ring back? You wouldn't take *that* from her!

PERCY:

Violet Gaffney demands it.

HELEN:

Then you have told Violet Gaffney of me?

PERCY:

She made me. She kept asking questions. She is terribly jealous.

JENNIE:

Ah, who would not be!

HELEN:

Jennie!

(*Overcome at last, the two fall into each other's arms. Percy, mistaking their mirth for Helen's grief and Jennie's effort to comfort her, observes them in some alarm, but soon regains his usual complacency.*)

HELEN:

(*Turning on him suddenly.*)

You devil! You see how it is with her—and you have just met!

PERCY:

(*Genuinely alarmed.*)

Good God! Another!

HELEN:

Be brave, Jennie! Be brave!

JENNIE:

(*Disentangling herself and mopping her eyes.*)

I'll try.

HELEN:

And now for Miss Violet Gaffney. You have told her of the ring?

PERCY:

I had to. She dragged it out of me.

HELEN:

And she wants it?

PERCY:

Yes. She won't name the day until I get it back and hand it to her.

(*Ingratiatingly, trying to take Helen's hand.*)

You are settled in life and—well, maybe not happy, but that is fate—

JENNIE:

And *you* want to marry Violet Gaffney? No, she will *not* give you the ring!

HELEN:

Yes, Jennie, I must. Think of Violet Gaffney.

JENNIE:

But—

HELEN:

(*Commandingly.*)

Go to the safe. Open it. This key will unlock the compartment to the left. In it you will find a leather case. Bring it.

(*Hands her a bunch of household keys.*)

Go!

(*Exit Jennie.*)

PERCY:

Thank you, Hel-*een*.

HELEN:

Tell me of Violet.

PERCY:

The same old story. Just as it has been all my life. I went to the Just-a-Bite Restaurant one day for my lunch. There was a new cashier. As I paid my check I spoke to her and looked into her eyes.

HELEN:

Just as you have done thousands of times, careless of your power, regardless of the hearts you may break.

PERCY:

But what can I do?

(*Enter Jennie with the leather jewel-case.*)

HELEN:

Percy, do me one last favor.

PERCY:

Give it a name.

HELEN:

Turn your back. Don't watch me as I say good-bye to something I have treasured all these years.

PERCY:

I understand, Hel-*een*. I will respect your sorrow.

(*He stalks grandly toward a window in the far right-hand corner of the room and stares out into the street. From where he stands he cannot hear the whispers of Helen and Jennie down-stage.*)

HELEN:

What a lot of junk. Let us try to find the ring.

(*She empties the contents of the jewel-box upon the table and she and Jennie bend over it.*)

JENNIE:

(*Holding up a red cameo ring.*)
Here it is!

HELEN:

(*Examining it.*)
No. Not that. That one, I remember, I got from my Aunt Nora when I was fourteen.

JENNIE:

(*Seizing another one.*)
Well, then, this one.

HELEN:

(*Comparing it to the other.*)
No; not that one either. That one I won in a raffle at the Lutheran Church.

JENNIE:

(*Holding up two more.*)
Or this—or this.

HELEN:

(*Dubiously.*)
I don't know. There was a rage for cameo rings when I was a kid. I must have received six of them one Christmas.

JENNIE:

I should say you did! Here are eight tied together with a string.

HELEN:

(*Prodding into the pile again.*)
And here is another. And another.

JENNIE:

How are you going to pick out—

HELEN:

Sh-h-h-h!

(*She moves around the table so that she stands between it and Percy, with the contents of the jewel-box behind her. She motions Jennie to be silent.*)

HELEN:

Percy.

PERCY:

(*Turning and starting down.*)
You have it?

HELEN:

Yes, here it is. And you really want it?

PERCY:

(*Solemnly.*)
Violet demands it.

HELEN:

And she shall have it!

(*Turning around she picks up thirteen red cameo rings. They make a comfortable double handful as she faces Percy again and holds them out.*)

HELEN:

There is your ring. Can you pick it out?

PERCY:

(*Aghast.*)
But there are—

HELEN:

Thirteen red cameo rings! Thirteen kisses by the old mill. Thirteen engagements! Thirteen boobs like you, my friend! Now which is yours?

PERCY:

But I—

(*At which point, just as Percy, as a sign of his bafflement and rage, begins to chew off the ends of his long, dark moustache, the gentle stage-hands slide out two flats in the first groove, and as they come together with a kerthump, the leader of the orchestra signals the opening snorts of a quick march and two low comedians rush from the right entrance, the one pursuing the other with a large property adz*).

CURTAIN.

THE STORY WRITERS

By Sherwood Anderson

ALBERT PRINDLE was a young lawyer with a soul. He had a wife who sang in the church choir and was very neat and precise in her housekeeping. Prindle was a man who liked a certain disorder about him; "atmosphere" he called it. His wife, Doris Prindle, regarded all disorder as something approaching vice, and insisted, with a quiet firmness that did not encourage argument, that he keep his cigar ashes out of the flower pots and his pipe heels out of the dessert dishes. As Doris Prindle did the housework, made the dresses for their two little girls, did the family washing and even managed, out of their limited income, to put money in the bank, Prindle did not feel that he was in a position to protest.

At the same time he felt that there were things to be said for his point of view. He aspired to be a story writer, an artist leaving behind an undying name as well as a lawyer specializing in the collection of slow accounts. He had already written one story that was months coming back from a popular magazine, from which he argued that the editors of the magazine must surely have hesitated a long time before sending it back. Later he sent the same story to several other magazines whose editors returned it promptly enough, but then, he told himself, they were editors of second-rate magazines anyway and at best had not daring enough to publish the work of a new man.

Prindle felt that if he could get into the right atmosphere he could do some big work. On lazy summer afternoons he sat in his office filled with envy of those writers who had spent years in the far west or in the frozen north or who, like Kipling, had put in their apprenticeship at the writer's trade in India, where adventure stalked through the hot tropic nights. When he read in a magazine of a well-known writer who had started through the South Seas in an open boat he walked up and down the rug in the narrow office muttering, "Of course," he said, "going where the air is heavy with romance and mystery. That's what makes a writing man. You just give me that chance. Give me a few months in an atmosphere of adventure and of free, full living and I will make them look up. I wish I might have some such chance for real expression before I die."

Seeking atmosphere Prindle had tried the experiment of arranging a room in the attic of his home for what he called a "workshop." He adorned the walls of the room with prints cut from magazines and had in it a writing desk he had made after a plan shown in an arts and crafts publication. For an hour or two after dinner Prindle wrote religiously all through one winter until one wet evening when he came home to find the family washing strung up in his "workshop." After that he felt that the place had in some way lost a certain flavor he had been trying very hard to give it.

This flavor Prindle could never quite achieve in his own house. Things were always happening. When he had got into the evening's work—"the sweat of composition," he loved secretly to call it—the younger daughter, in the nursery below, was likely to begin demanding a drink of water. Just when the scheming old political boss, in league

with the interests, had left the papers lying on the window sill where the mischievous raven could snatch them and carry them to the office of the brilliant young reformer, intent upon breaking up the courthouse ring, a voice would come floating up to him from the living-room. "Albert, will you get Esther a drink?" the voice would ask, "I have a headache." A man can't get back into a story after that.

And so Prindle started out to find his atmosphere. Out into the streets he went in the evening and strolled thoughtfully along trying to find a way out of his difficulty. "I need the exercise," he told Doris, who he felt wouldn't understand. Walking through the quiet streets he dreamed of fortunes coming to him from mysterious uncles or from grateful old ladies to whom he had given a seats in the street car, fortunes with which he could live the free open life of his dreams. He should have liked a year in the old dead states of Europe or in some wild land of adventure but in the end decided that the hostages he had given to fortune made these things impossible.

Prindle stood one evening under the awning by Appleby's grocery store on Thirty-third Street thinking of all these things when Appleby came out and joined him. The two men stood in friendly talk. On an impulse Prindle told Appleby what was in his mind. He felt that he had to talk to someone about it. To his surprise he found that Appleby also nursed in his apron-covered bosom a love of the art of words. He invited Prindle into the store and, taking a manuscript out of a coat hanging on a nail by the icebox, began reading to him a tale on which at odd moments he had been working. "Of course," he said, "it needs working over."

Prindle leaned over the counter and scratched his head. "You have got them in a rather bad hole," he said judiciously. "What are you going to make them do now? How are you going to get them out of the mess?"

"That's just it," said Appleby. "It wants work there. I admit that. A fellow gets no time to think and work in a place like this. He is always having to stop to sell stuff. I think, of course, that the dark-eyed woman should die. I thought of letting her be killed in a railroad wreck or of making her take poison. The trouble is, Prindle, that I've never seen a railroad wreck nor a lady who has taken poison. I saw a man once who had delirium tremens in a restaurant, but that won't do me any good here. To tell the truth, I've never seen anything. I've had to stay right here selling soap and ham to support my family. I don't just know how to go at it to make it real. I think a man should stay true to life in a thing like this, don't you, Prindle?"

And so the two men had talked things over thoroughly. They decided that together they could afford to rent a room as a lodging for their two muses. Appleby had a cousin who was agent for a building on Fourth Street, and he thought that through him they could get something they could use at reduced rates. They really wanted a room with an open fire. Prindle thought that an open fire suggested stories and that they should have also a view of trees or of a running stream. Appleby agreed with him, but suggested that it would be as well to have the place where a man could drop in at odd moments as inspiration seized him. "We can give it a kind of Bohemian air," he said.

"'*A là Boheme*,' eh!" agreed Prindle, and left the hiring of the room in charge of the groceryman. He wondered if Appleby understood French.

For the next week the two men spent their evenings getting the room on Fourth Street fitted up. Prindle brought the prints from the walls of the deserted attic workshop. Failing an open fireplace, Appleby had picked up, at bargain figures, a small iron coal stove from a weeping old woman on Fourteenth Street. She was a scrub woman and explained to Appleby that she wanted the money to get her daughter out of trouble.

The girl had stolen a bolt of silk from a shop on Front Street and had been caught in the act by the store detective. She had always been a good girl, the mother explained, and had been kept in school only by great sacrifice on the mother's part. But she was inordinately fond of beautiful clothes and in a moment of weakness had gone into the store and stolen the silk for a new dress. "I had to stand listening to all that drivel," said Appleby, "but it was worth it, as I got a bargain on the stove."

Prindle brought in a box of little wooden figures and spread them out on the table. They had been carved by a half-witted boy who had taken them, as a gift, to a very beautiful girl, the daughter of a brewer. The brewer's family had reaped much fun out of the things, chaffing the girl on the havoc she worked in the hearts of the simple. Prindle had bought the figures at a bargain from the brewer's son, a rosy-cheeked boy just growing into manhood, who had started dissipating secretly. He had read somewhere that a certain great dramatist used miniature figures of men and women, pushing them here and there on his study-table as he developed his plots.

The idea struck him as being a particularly good one. "That boy tried to gouge me. He wanted to tell me a long story about the number of years it took the half-witted boy to whittle the things out and how well they were done," said Prindle, "but I cut him short. I told him that I could buy what I wanted in a toy shop at five cents apiece and that's what I paid him."

There was some difference of opinion between the two men as to whether it would be better to have in the room one large table at which they could both work or two smaller tables at which, as Appleby said, each man could develop his own individuality. They settled on a long table with a row of dictionaries and standard classics to divide the two working ends.

On a Friday evening the room was ready. Appleby went over late in the afternoon and started a fire. On the way back to the store he smiled reflectively. "We've caught the atmosphere of art," he muttered, "there's some good work going to come out of that shop."

At eight o'clock Prindle got off the car at Appleby's store and the two men set out.

It was an early hour for closing Appleby's grocery store, but Appleby felt that he had come to a moment when the ordinary course of events should be disregarded. The boy who usually closed the store had gone home to sit with a brother who was dying of tuberculosis. Appleby explained the case to Prindle as they walked along the street.

The Grady boy, he said, was a good boy. He had given up his chance for a college education and a career as a physician, on which his heart had been set, to help make comfortable the last days of an elder brother. The elder brother had been a newspaper reporter and had spoiled his career by an affair with a woman in a questionable resort. After a period of wild dissipation he had been stricken with tuberculosis and sending him to Colorado had exhausted the resources of the family. After all, as Appleby pointed out, the case had been hopeless from the first, and the money might have been saved. A complication of diseases had taken hold of the wasted body and the boy had been brought home and was patiently waiting for death. Appleby had been letting the Grady boy off early in the evening that he might help take care of the invalid. "I am sorry for the boy," he explained to Prindle, "but I am out of patience with the humdrum commonplaceness of such lives. I wish I might associate with men and women who really taste life, you know, the fellows that really get into the stream of things and see the romance of life flow past."

Prindle agreed with Appleby. "A nice mood I'm in for story writing this night of all nights," he cried impatiently. He explained that it had been a trying day at the office. A woman had come to him that afternoon,—she

was the widow of a fellow lawyer, and had spent the late afternoon telling him a tale of family unhappiness. She was a dull, uninteresting little woman who wanted to stay at home and bring up her family in a conventional, God-fearing way, who, by a streak of ill fortune, had married an indolent, imaginative, furiously jealous fellow who had wrecked their two lives. The woman had insisted on telling the intimate details of her unhappiness, and it had got Prindle's mind off his plot. "It was a flat affair, but it got on my nerves," he told Appleby. "You see, she met an old schoolfellow on the street and went to lunch with him. Her husband saw them going into the hotel, He had been drinking and followed them in and shot himself in their presence there in the dining room filled with people. Now his people are trying to keep her out of a share in her husband's fortune.

"By George, I'd like to meet one of the other kind of women, one of the dashing, daring, romantic kind," cried Prindle, "I'd like to have the young reformer in my story meet and be tempted by a real woman, a diamond thief or a spy for some foreign government."

As they climbed the stairs to the room on the fourth floor Prindle and Appleby came upon a pretty young girl who stood on the first landing with her lover. He was a young mechanic in his overalls, and with a very straight, manly body. From the darkness of the apartment in which the girl lived the voice of a woman floated out to them. As they passed up a face appeared in the semi-darkness at the door. It was the face of an old woman with an evil, hard-looking mouth, and she was calling the pretty girl a hussy and demanding that the young man be gone and that the girl come into the house and wash the dishes.

On the fourth floor, in a room directly across from their new studio, lived an old man. He came out onto the landing as they climbed the stairs and after eyeing them suspiciously began locking his door. It was an elaborate locking. There was first the lock on the door itself, then two heavy padlocks passed through heavy staples and going on at both the top and bottom of the door. Finally there was a heavy iron bar that swung across the center of the door and locked into place.

Appleby explained to Prindle that the old man had been a successful contractor but had got half insane notions in his head. The real-estate cousin had gone into details about him. He was working on the model of a machine for recording thought. It was to be carried in the pocket and would record the thoughts of another person similarly equipped though the other person be thousands of miles away over mountain, lake and forest.

Appleby and Prindle stood on the landing by their door discussing the old man who stood on the stairs watching them, his eyes filled with distrust. "He has been on the point of perfecting the foolish thing for the last five years," said Appleby, "and lives in fear that someone will steal his secret."

Appleby looked through a window to the street below. On a corner two young men were fighting furiously. A policeman coming up, they ran off down the street. Against a building stood a girl with a white, set face staring down the street after the running figures. "I might have the dark-eyed woman fall off a roof," he mused. "Now, if there were only some natural way to get her up there." "It don't do to put anything grewsome into a story," said Prindle. "These editors are mighty ticklish about things like that."

In their room the two men stirred up the fire, although the night was mild, and got out their manuscripts preparatory to their evening's labor. They thought that the glowing stove would add atmosphere to the rather gloomy room. After a moment the stove made the room overwarm. They opened the window, but the roar of the street coming up disconcerted them. From the room below there came the sound of

pounding and of grinding. "It's a regular bedlam," complained Prindle. "If we're going to do any real work here we'll have to put a stop to that racket." They decided to investigate.

The occupant of the room below proved to be a blind man who supported himself and his daughter by grinding kitchen knives which the daughter collected and delivered during the day. He sat on a chair facing a grindstone, which was being turned by a slender, black-haired girl. He told the two men that he had been a fireman at a brick kiln in the hills back of the city and had been so cunning at keeping his fires alight and his wood for firing cut and ready that crowds of men and women sometimes came out of the city on Sunday afternoons to see the wonder of the blind man at his work. One night there had been a fire in the woods in the hills and the blind man told how he had made his way with difficulty through the roaring flames to a little creek at the foot of the hills and had waded down this to safety. The terrible experience had all but lost him the use of one of his legs and had forced him to take up a new occupation. He proved to be very reasonable and put off the grinding until later in the night, at the request of the storywriters.

Prindle and Appleby climbed the stairs again. They were nearly out of patience with the constant distracting adventures of the night. Silently they wrote for ten minutes and then there came a knocking at the door. Prindle got up and opened the door impatiently. A young Jewish boy came in and introduced himself. He had been told that they were writers and came to inquire if they took pupils and if their charges were high. He had come out from Russia and had a sister who had been caught by the police at a revolutionist meeting and sent to Siberia. He was working in the warehouse of a wholesale grocery company and thought that if he could learn to write English he might get a chance as shipping clerk at a higher wage. He planned to save money with which to bribe the police and get his sister to America.

Appleby was in a temper. He dismissed the boy with brutal brevity. "This place will never do for us," he cried, "the greatest genius on earth couldn't work out stories in a hubbub like this."

Prindle, looking up sadly, shook his head. The two men went back to their places at the long table and for ten minutes bent silently over their work.

"Do you think that a story should be started with a quotation, you know, a line or two from some famous poem?" asked Appleby. Prindle had noticed that some of the other great writers did that.

There came a medley of shouts and oaths from the street below. The two men ran to the open window. A tiny girl, hurrying across the street from a corner saloon with a foaming pitcher of beer, had been run down by a speeding motorcyclist. She was apparently not seriously hurt and the two men saw her standing in the gutter sobbing and holding in her hand the handle of the broken pitcher. The rider, jumping on his machine, was trying to escape. Men ran shouting and swearing out of stores. A mountain of a man jumped from a passing car and, grabbing the fleeing rider by the collar, shook him until his coat came off and he fell to the pavement. Jerking the fallen man to his feet again, the huge fellow shook until the trousers, the seat of which he had clutched, were torn to the knees. Clutching again, the big man shook the now limp rider until, with a loud, tearing sound, the shirt came away from his back in two long strips. The rider ran down the middle of the street, holding up his torn trousers. The crowd jeered and shouted with delight. The huge man took the motorcycle and very deliberately pounded it into scrap iron against a telephone pole.

Appleby and Prindle, grabbing their hats, ran hurriedly down the stairs. They stood on the sidewalk and waved their hands joyously over the destruc-

tion of the machine. Under the lamplight Prindle recognized the large man as a famous jurist from the federal bench. They decided to give up writing for the evening and as they walked home together they talked again of their work.

"If I only knew just how to describe a railroad wreck," said Appleby, "if I had ever seen a wreck, I could make a real story out of that start of mine. A woman, such as I have drawn there, would never give up her grip on a man. She should die for the good of the story, but she should die in a big, smashing way."

"That's the trouble with men like you and me trying to write," said Prindle. "We don't have a chance to see the big things, the romance, of life. The big, primitive emotions never come to the men and women we see and know. Sometimes I think I'll quit trying. Nothing will ever happen to me, I know just how it will be. Everything will just go on forever flat and stale. The dead level of life,—that's what I call,—the atmosphere we live in."

A SMALL TOWN

By Thyra Samter Winslow

SIX of us went for a drive into the country.

We passed a little town.

The streets were laid out in even rows.

Tiny houses, painted white, stood far back in big yards.

There was one business street with an assortment of toy-sized stories.

"This town," said one of us, "is the place where I have always wanted to live —a little town, and peace."

We all agreed that it was ideal, that we were longing for quiet, simple pleasures and sincerity.

Three days later one of the men bought us a dinner to celebrate the signing of a three-years' business contract which would keep him in the big city.

One of the women, an actress, wept because she had to leave town for two months in the West.

The other couple took a new apartment at ten dollars a month more rent, because it was easier to reach after the theatre and the neighborhood had more life in it.

And we went to a downtown hotel for the winter.

WHEN a woman is bored, the first thing to go to sleep is her conscience.

PATERNITÉ OBLIGE

By Cyrus Wood

"WHAT'S he doing?"

"Weeping, monsieur. He weeps most of the time. It is a strange case. He thinks he's Louis XIV."

"Ah? Most interesting!"

The great financier was about to pass on. Suddenly he turned pale and stopped. The pitiable creature who had been moaning on the rude, worn-out pallet had lifted his head and was regarding him with burning eyes. But it was not the eyes that affected M. Champenois; other inmates of the asylum had directed gazes as burning as this at him to-day. That which sent his blood rushing heartward was a long, straight, deep line extending from cheek to temple near the left eye. That line carried him back twenty years. He was a student again, and he was holding in his arms a little bundle of flesh and lace. Léonie was leaning over the back of his chair, her sweet face close to his: "What a pity, Eugène, that he has that terrible birthmark!"

"Monsieur! What is it? You are ill?"

"No, no, it is nothing. I'm all right now. But come into your office, M. le Directeur, and tell me about this case. It interests me."

"There is not much to tell," said the director when they were comfortably seated in his private office, far from the shrieks of mania. "He was arrested in the Palais de Versailles for going to bed in the chamber of Louis XIV. It didn't take them long to find out he was insane, and he was brought here. We have not succeeded in discovering his name, or anything else about him."

Monsieur Champenois went home sorely troubled. That he, the rich and powerful, should be the father of that *misérable* in the madhouse was incongruous, unbelievable, abominable! Memories of student days on the left bank rushed up out of their ancient obscurity. For years they had lain unthought of in the dim recesses of his consciousness, like hidden bombs. One little spark to a short, dry fuse, and the explosion came, wiping out in an instant all the pride, the self-respect and the conceit that great success had brought.

Bah! That wasn't his son! *C'est impossible!* 'Twas a coincidence, that scar. He wouldn't think about it any more. That loan to Dubois now, what if he should—Léonie! How they had loved! What a wonderful mistress! Those days were happy—the happiest he had ever known. And the little one! How proud he had been! Where was Léonie now? Dead, perhaps. The eyes that fellow had—that poor *misérable!* Bah! That loan to Dubois now — Dubois—loan—Du—*misérable —misérable! Le pauvre misérable!*

He couldn't sleep. He ordered the car and was driven to the Bois. Of no avail. Always he saw those burning eyes, and the straight, deep line running from cheek to temple. "He weeps most of the time." His son, his son, weeping on a worn-out pallet—his son who had gone to bed in the Palace of Versailles!

II

"SIRE!"

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte!"

Louis le Grand turned slowly on his high heels and surveyed majestically

the bowed head of his First Gentleman of the Bedchamber. The royal toilet had been completed, the windows opened, and Louis was standing at one of them for his matutinal breath of fresh air. A lovely vista of spring foliage basked in the balmy sunlight; fountains arched their limpid streams in glistening curves; the twittering of swallows—*les hirondelles* as dear to the hearts of French poets as is the nightingale to the hearts of ours—the rustle of leaves stirred by the breeze, the sweet odor of springtime, the invigorating *feel* of it all—wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a king? Yet Louis was angry.

"Monsieur le Comte, look there!"

The First Gentleman of the Bedchamber obeyed.

"Beautiful!" he murmured.

The Grand Monarque shook with rage.

"Mais regardez-la! Regardez-la!"

At some distance from the window a gardener was clipping the grass. The First Gentleman of the Bedchamber saw and understood.

"It is infamous!" shouted the king. "I won't have it! What! Can I not look out of my window in the morning without having my eyes offended? Order him off! This is terrible!" He began to weep.

The First Gentleman of the Bedchamber bowed and withdrew. As he went, he exchanged an elaborate wink with the attendant who stood at the door.

III

Monsieur Champenois awoke from a sound and refreshing sleep. How good it was to be able to retire at night with nothing to trouble one's mind! What a hideous time that had been, when the eyes of that *misérable* had haunted his dreams! But he had fixed that. Money! What would not money accomplish! As he lay there he let his thoughts wander to that son of his who had gazed at him so burningly from the worn-out pallet. He tried to picture him now, lying royally in the softest of beds, the morning light shut out by the richest of hangings which fell from the magnificent canopy over his head. He had made him happy, for his and Léonie's sakes — and, of course, to erase that burning gaze from his own memory.

It had been expensive, but it was worth it. The first consideration had been secrecy—his old friend Dubois had taken care of that. Dubois had been his university friend, and he had known about Léonie and the little one. He had asked for that loan just at the right time for M. Champenois. So Dubois had handled everything, from the purchase and embellishment of the old chateau near Beauvais to the engagement and costuming of the actors and actresses as courtiers—to say nothing of the Spanish dancer who had consented to be Marie Thérèse.

They had found out that the young lunatic knew his Louis Quatorze; nothing but a faithful representation of the court, costuming and personages of the reign would suffice. M. Champenois was very careful in his instructions to Dubois as to the personnel of his son's court. He insisted that the ladies and gentlemen should be chosen with an eye to their ability to adhere only to the more moral aspects of their prototypes; anything approaching the laxity of the Sun King's days was to be strictly forbidden. Consequently Dubois was glad to be able to engage married couples among the stage folk. In this way he secured Monsieur and Madame, as the king's eldest brother, the Duc d'Orléans, and his wife, Henrietta of England, were called; an older couple were engaged for Anne of Austria and Mazarin, and there were others among the lesser lights. Of course, in selecting Marie Thérèse, Dubois had to look in the other direction, for the Queen of France would have to be all that her position implied. This arrangement had the advantage of creating that desirable distance which should separate a queen and her subjects, so that Marie Thérèse was "Her Majesty" when the king was around, and *cette coquine Es-*

pagnole when his back was turned. But the little Spanish Dancer didn't mind; she needed the money, and she was the best paid of the lot—a fact to grow cynically verbose over.

M. Champenois sighed pleasantly and went back to sleep.

IV

The Duc d'Orléans was shaving. He had hung his perruque on a hook in the wall, and had thrown his costume upon the bed; he stood in long white silk stockings and linen undergarments which were very-twentieth-century. To him there entered his charming wife. In the way in which she opened and shut the door, and stood leaning back against it, Monsieur knew that something was wrong. He looked at her through the mirror.

Her hair was piled high on her head, clustering in puffs and curls to an extraordinary height; two long curls rested on her bare shoulders, which seemed too frail to support the ample folds of the velvet train; no modern straight-front corset ever produced the hard, invincible line of the satin basque into which her waist was squeezed; the lace which cascaded over the brocaded skirt, and rippled over her bare elbows, had been recently torn; her necklace of artificial pearls was broken. Her face was livid and her breath came pantingly. Monsieur might have attributed this to the tightness of her clothes and the steep flight of steps that led to their room, but there was something more than fatigue in her eyes.

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, the beast! The brute!"

"What is it?"

"Wait. Help me to get out of these stays. They're killing me. How did they ever stand it?"

Monsieur lent an experienced hand; when she was more comfortable Madame's fury burst.

"We will leave here at once! That lunatic has insulted me! The pig, he tried to make love to me! He is a devil! I had to fight to get away from him. He tore my dress and made me turn my ankle as well! Look at it! It hurts."

Monsieur knelt and rubbed it solicitously.

"What did he say?"

"Oh, a lot of disgusting stuff about how desirable I was, how he longed for me, how happy he could make me! I wouldn't put up with it from a real king, let alone a near one."

"Dear, dear, this is too bad. I feared as much, but I had hoped it wouldn't happen so soon. I was just telling myself what an easy time we were having."

"What an easy time *you* were having, you mean. If you think it has been easy for me to squeeze my waist into that thing, you're mistaken! But I suppose you don't care! You're the one who arranged the whole business, anyway. I didn't want to come. I knew what it would be like! What do the fools mean by humoring this madman? What's beneath it? That's what I want to know."

Monsieur finished his shaving.

"Never mind what's beneath it. That's not our affair. If you knew your history, you would know that Louis did make love to Henrietta of England—and that she egged him on!"

"What! What do you mean? Do you mean to imply that *I*—oh, this is too much!"

"Now wait. It didn't go very far, because Anne of Austria went to her son and told him to leave Henrietta alone. He didn't have to be true to Marie Thérèse, she said, but he should pick out some other lady for his mistress. So Louis cast his eyes upon several and finally chose Louise de la Vallière. She was one of Henrietta's ladies-in-waiting."

"Well, he'll not choose one of my ladies-in-waiting — they're all nice girls!"

"I know they are," said Monsieur.

"What!" shrieked Madame.

"I presume they are."

Monsieur went out into the corridor and called:

"Monsieur Michaut! Will you and Madame come here?"

In walked Anne of Austria and Mazarin. The Duc and Duchesse acquainted them with the situation. Together they went over the list of girls who might be used as Louise de la Vallière. So well had Dubois picked the company that they decided not one was available.

"We will have to import one," said Anne of Austria.

V

"My dear little Jeanne, you have no idea how bored I am! My little marquis has gone to Dieppe with his family. What? Go to the country—alone? I should perish! My sweet little doctor has advised me to do the same. But I can't. I love my Paris too well. Oh, Jeanne, I'm dying of ennui. Can't you come over—and bring along the first two nice little fellows you meet? You can't? Oh, dear, what a bore! I suppose I shall have to commit suicide after all. You know, Jeanne, I must have life. I was meant for intrigue. I often think that I am a reincarnation of Ninon de l'Enclos or one of those other adorable creatures! What? He's arrived already? Then I suppose I must hang up, as my little American says. *Au revoir, ma petite!*"

How wonderful for talking in bed is the European telephone! One can lie on one's back with a foot in the air, smoking a cigarette from one hand and holding the ingenious appliance to one's ear and mouth with the other. Christianne sighed as she replaced it on its stand. She must get up. What a bore! Her little voile or her little serge? *"N'importe!"*

There was a knock at her door.

"Qui est là?"

"Mademoiselle?"

"Eh?"

"May I come in?"

"Certainly!"

A stranger entered.

"Mademoiselle, my name is Monsieur Dubois. I have come on a matter of business, mademoiselle—if it may be called such."

"Business? Oh!" Christianne became bored again.

"May I come directly to the point? Your name and address were given me by a gentleman whom I shall not name. He said you would gladly listen to my proposition, especially—you will pardon me—especially as the compensation will be quite commensurate with your —ah—complaisance."

Christianne laughed merrily. "Eh, bien! My little Dubois! What a funny way to put it!" She rushed to him and hugged him fervently.

Dubois rose freezingly. "Mademoiselle, it is not for myself."

"No?" Christianne did not disguise her disappointment.

"No, mademoiselle. Shall I continue the proposition?"

"Ca m'est égal."

"I am speaking for a gentleman, mademoiselle, whose son is insane. He believes he is Louis XIV. As he is very rich, he has established his son in a chateau, and surrounded him with a court. He has brought back the days of that monarch in all their splendor. He loves his poor son, mademoiselle, and wishes to make him comfortable."

"I see. And you want me to help make him comfortable."

"Exactly. I want you to go to that court as Louise de la Vallière."

Christianne clapped her hands delightedly. "That would be wonderful! In a chateau, you say? In the country? And my doctor has advised me to go to the country! Oh, monsieur! When shall I start? Which way do I go? Oh, monsieur!"

"Just a moment, mademoiselle. First you are to sign this contract. I hope you will find the salary satisfactory."

Christianne opened her eyes wide at the amount named.

"Then you are to study this book. It is Lair's biography of Louise de la Vallière. You will find in it that Louise was modest, shy and retiring, that she loved the king truly, that she was lacking in greed and ambition, that for

a long time her affair with the king was kept secret, and that when he deserted her for Madame de Montespan she finally entered a convent. It is necessary that you adhere as closely as possible to that program, mademoiselle."

"Willingly, Monsieur! That is, all except the convent. I should love to go into one, but I do not feel that I am quite ready. Shall I sign here, Monsieur?"

VI

"STAND here, Mademoiselle."

With unbending austerity, Mazarin indicated a spot near one of the large windows through which the light flooded the room. It was a position calculated to enhance the beauty of this latest addition to the court of France.

"It is important that you stop smiling, Mademoiselle. This levity on your part will surely spoil it all."

"Pardon, Monsieur."

Louise de la Vallière composed her features and assumed the position assigned to her.

"Messieurs—dames, le Roi s'approche!"

Conversation ceased and the ladies and gentlemen formed in a semi-circular line facing the grand staircase from the top of which this announcement had come. A breathless pause, and then much rustling of silks and satins as the courtiers made profound obeisance. Louis le Grand stood at the head of the stairs. For an instant he regarded the bowed heads, then with a slight bow and a gesture he slowly descended. Another gesture restored his courtiers to the perpendicular. Slowly and majestically Louis passed along the line, speaking briefly now and then with someone. At last he reached Louise de la Vallière. Mazarin was at his elbow.

"It is Louise de la Vallière, Sire."

A great light shone in Louis' eye. Louise courtesied low; the king quickly extended his hand and helped her to rise.

"Come here a minute," he said. "I want to speak to you."

VII

"Que fais-tu, papa?"

Monsieur Champenois started.

"Reading, my dear."

"I can see that, my angel. But what?"

"Nothing but history."

"History! Always history! Why are you so interested in history all of a sudden?"

Madeleine Champenois rose and twined her slender arms about her father's neck, looking over his shoulder.

"Fouquet and Louise de la Vallière," she read at the top of the page. "Who were they, papa?"

"Fouquet was a very great man at the court of Louis XIV."

"And who was she?"

"Why, she was—was—never mind, Madeleine."

"Did they love each other, papa?"

"No, my dear."

"Oh, papa, please tell me about it."

"Don't be impatient. When you and Jacques are married you may borrow the book."

"Oh, papa! How soon will that be?"

"Monsieur Dubois!"

"Show him in."

Monsieur Champenois was delighted.

"You may go, Madeleine."

The girl and the visitor exchanged greetings at the door. Then Dubois advanced toward his friend. They were old cronies now. The spirit of the old university days had been revived since Dubois had taken over the management of the chateau-palace.

"Dubois! I'm so glad you've come. How is everything?"

"Splendid, my friend."

"The girl—she has been installed?"

"Yes. And they say that she plays her part very well."

"Then he has already—"

"Yes. The very day she arrived."

"Good. Then Henrietta of England will remain?"

"Yes. She is satisfied."

"Dubois. If I could see him! You cannot imagine how I long to."

"But how?"

"Listen. I have thought of a plan. Now that he has a Louise de la Vallière there should be a Fouquet. You remember he was Superintendent of Finance, and tried to gain the king's favor by ingratiating himself with La Vallière. She, however, mistook his advances for love, and complained of him to the king. That was the downfall of Fouquet. Now, I have thought that I could go as Fouquet—"

VIII

"Que je t'aime!"
"Et moi, je t'adore!"
"Ma belle Louise!"
"Mon petit Roi!"

True to history, the apartment of the Count de Saint Aignan, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the King, had been selected for the royal rendezvous. The Count was not the least pleased of the three at the arrangement, for it meant his promotion from the dingy little room on the top floor, to a magnificent suite with a balcony commanding a charming view. 'Twas on this balcony that the happy lovers found themselves.

Christianne was charmed. Never had she hoped to experience with such absolute security the thrills of such a perfect clandestine romance. More than ever now did she believe herself a reincarnation of one of those precious packages which history has so plainly marked "Fragile." True, she could have named several other "little fellows" whom she would have preferred as her companion, but royal favorites must take their kings as they find them. But then, on such a night, with such surroundings, and with such a salary, Caliban himself would not have been too hideous.

She had studied her biography well. For two weeks she had held as shyly aloof as she was able, seeming awed by the rank of her wooer; then gradually she had succumbed to his *empressement*. And to-night she had consented to meet him here. She smiled as she thought of the little Spanish dancer between herself and whom an immediate antagonism had sprung. Half the joy of the escapade was in taking Louis away from her.

Poor little neglected Spanish woman! Didst think a dream could last? Thy prototype, likewise, basked for a while in the light of the Sun King's love, only to learn that for her he was no longer a Sun King so much as an *Ignis Fatuus* one. But there thou hast it on her, for thou art only a dancer, with the morals and inclinations of such, while the other must needs live up to the traditions of the Royal House of Spain.

But it didn't take Christianne long to learn that she had not robbed Marie Thérèse of much. Little by little she began to feel that this lunatic was repulsive. His gorgeous clothes could not mitigate the offensive ugliness of his face; she took back what she had thought about Caliban. "He is indeed crazy," mused Christianne, "if he thinks he's a lover. Ugh! I won't be able to stand much of this!"

IX

"WHO the devil is that?" said Anne of Austria.

"Fouquet, Madame."

"Well, who the devil is Fouquet?"

"I don't know."

"Is he crazy, too?"

"Wouldn't be surprised."

"Well, he acts like it anyway. He's just invited me to a big fête he's going to give at his chateau."

"He never comes out of his character, does he?"

"Never. It's 'His Majesty' this and 'His Majesty' that, even when 'His Majesty' isn't around. And he addresses us all by our titles all the time, too. What's his game, I wonder?"

"Perhaps he's a detective."

"Yes, or a novelist."

"Well, whatever he is, he's a good actor."

"But he's not one of us. That's plain."

"Well, we have a little leisure now. Who'll play *vingt et un?*"

The richly dressed individual of whom they had been talking was pacing the other end of the room, hands clasped behind his back, head lowered, the picture of a statesman upon whom the cares of an empire rested. The fact that the lunatic for whom this elaborate mummery had been devised was not in the room did not interrupt his performance, nor did he change his demeanor when he found himself alone. "Be thorough" had been Monsieur Champenois' motto for a lifetime, and he could see no reason for changing his habits now. Presently he was interrupted by the rustling of a skirt. Louise de la Vallière slipped furtively into the room. When she saw him she halted suddenly, as if detected in some wrong.

"Ah, Mademoiselle de la Vallière!" said Fouquet. "The very person who has been occupying my thoughts! And they were charming thoughts, Mademoiselle!"

"What, is it you again, old fool? Haven't I warned you to leave me alone?"

"Oh, Mademoiselle! Why are you so harsh on poor old Fouquet? Fouquet, who is devoted to your interests!"

Louise turned pale. At the other end of the room she had espied the Count de Saint Aignan, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber. He, too, had entered stealthily, but a warning gesture from Louise had stopped him.

"Eh?" said Fouquet.

The Count de Saint Aignan advanced.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "the King is asking for you."

Louise bestowed upon Saint Aignan a smile of approval.

"I will be there at once," she said. The Count withdrew. Fouquet walked along with her.

"Is he not adorable, Mademoiselle?"

"Saint Aignan?"

"Mais non, Mademoiselle. Le Roi."

"O! Oui."

"To me, Mademoiselle, he is wonderful. Such majesty! Such grandeur! What a love of the beautiful! His *penchant* for you, Mademoiselle, proves that."

"Monsieur!" said Louise. "What do you mean by this constant flattery? I won't have it, so there!"

With a flash of anger she left him and went into the apartments of the First Gentleman of the Bedchamber. Fouquet rubbed his hands in satisfaction. She was a good little actress, this Christianne. He admired the spirit she had shown; he pictured her entering Saint Aignan's rooms to keep her rendezvous with the King.

Imagine his surprise, therefore, when, upon going out of doors, he found Louis quietly playing croquet with Henrietta of England!

X

My dear little Jeanne:

Why don't you answer my letter? Didn't you get the one I wrote last week, telling you how tired I was getting of my little king? Well, my *ennui* increases every day. He is a nice little king enough, but—well, there is a much nicer little First Gentleman of the Bedchamber here. And, oh, *ma petite,* I have thought of a wonderful plan. Do you know anything at all about Louis XIV and his court? If not, read up on it. You will love it, Jeanne. And then let me know as soon as you can what you think of my scheme. You know, Louise de la Vallière was superseded in the king's affections by the Marquise de Montespan, who was a very beautiful woman—much more beautiful than La Vallière, my dear. Now, my idea is for you to come here as Montespan and take the king away from me. Think of the fun we will have! Please, Jeanne, will you do this for

Your little Christianne?

P. S. I am sending Monsieur Dubois to you with a contract. You must not refuse.

C.

Could the shades of La Vallière and Montespan have seen this letter, their hollow laughter would have reverberated through every corridor of the halls of the dead. The idea of the fair Louise inviting the proud Vashti to come and oust her from that position which she struggled so hard to retain, would have sent them both in search of Molière to enjoy the joke with them. Yet such is the power of the personal equa-

tion. History repeats itself in but one particular—it never repeats.

Jeanne read the letter over twice and went out in search of literature. Several days later she burst in upon the assembled company.

"Bon jour, messieurs et dames. Je suis la Marquise de Montespan."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Anne of Austria and fell into Mazarin's arms.

Louise de la Vallière rushed into her newly arrived rival's arms.

"But wait a minute," said Fouquet, starting up. "You musn't come here yet."

"Why not?" asked Montespan.

"It's not time yet. Good heavens, Montespan didn't become the royal favorite until about 1667!"

"Well, let's play it's 1667 now."

"But we can't. It's only 1661 now."

"No," said Mazarin, "it's 1667."

"Don't be foolish; you died in the spring of 1661. And Anne of Austria died in 1666. Why, look at me—I'm still here. I haven't even given my fête yet, and my arrest was nearly a month after that."

"Oh," said Saint Aignan. "You were arrested?"

"Of course I was."

"What for, may one ask?"

"Well, really, because the king thought I was making love to La Vallière. Of course that wasn't the charge. I was a grafter."

"And what happened to you?"

"I was condemned to be banished, but the king had me imprisoned instead. I died in prison."

"I see," said Saint Aignan. "Monsieur Michaut, may I speak to you a moment?" He took Mazarin aside and in the true manner of *intrigants* they put their heads together.

XI

"Be thorough" wrote Monsieur Champenois to his friend and confidant Dubois in giving him instructions as to the fête he was arranging for Louis XIV. And Dubois was. Long will that affair linger in the minds of those who enjoyed the financier's prodigality. La Fontaine's poetic account of the original fête need not have had a syllable changed to make it applicable to Monsieur Champenois' effort.

Louis was there in all his splendor. So were La Vallière and Montespan and Marie Thérèse, all the actors entering into the spirit of the occasion. Only Saint Aignan and Mazarin seemed troubled.

"What are we going to do?" said Saint Aignan in a puzzled tone to his fellow-conspirator.

"I don't know," said Mazarin.

"We'll have to stop him if we can."

"I'm afraid it's too late."

"Good Lord, I was sure it was a bluff! Why, the man must have millions."

"At any rate, he has enough to punish us later on."

"Try to stop that fool of a king."

"No use. Once he gets an idea into his head, he carries it out."

"If he does, we'll have to fly the coop to-morrow."

Gaily the evening waned. Monsieur Champenois was in his element. A stranger might have thought he was merely the host of an elaborate costume ball. After a wonderful banquet, there was dancing on the lawn. Monsieur Champenois looked on in the shade of a high, clipped hedge. Two shadowy forms approached him from either side.

"Monsieur," said one of these. As he turned toward the voice the other form suddenly flung a heavy cloak over Monsieur Champenois' head. There was a short scuffle; Monsieur Champenois was lifted bodily and carried away.

His guests danced on; gayest among them was that puissant monarch, Louis XIV.

XII

The next day was 1667. True, Mazarin and Anne of Austria were still alive, but such a solecism was easy for an indulgent king to disregard. Besides, he was too busy paying attention to Madame de Montespan to notice anything else. Of course everybody missed Fouquet.

"I wonder where he is?" said Saint Aignan.

"And so do I," said Mazarin.

Alas, poor Fouquet! In all your instructions to Dubois, why did you overlook the dungeon? Not nice places, dungeons. Dark, they are, and damp, and minus furniture. And sound-proof, too, Fouquet, so stop your shouting, man! Move your wretched pallet over into the driest corner and wait. Presently the turnkey will come again with more bread and water; maybe he will listen to reason this time. Perhaps if you increase your offer to twenty thousand francs he won't smile so pityingly. Hark! Here he is now. Calm down, Fouquet, and try your luck again.

"My friend—"

"I'm not your friend."

"But listen. Last night I offered you ten thousand francs to let me go. To-day I offer you twenty. I am very rich. I can spare it easily. Why do you laugh? Ah, do not go; I implore you! I beseech you! Will you bring me paper and pencil? On my knees I beg of you—oh, *mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* Come back! I shall go mad! I shall go mad!"

No use, Fouquet. They have probably told him that you are mad already, and that is why he smiles. Go back to your rude, worn-out pallet—rude, worn-out pallet! Something familiar about those words! Why that was what that poor *misérable* was lying on! The ingrate! To treat his benefactor so! Of course he doesn't know that you're his benefactor, but there, you can't be expected to be reasonable under such circumstances.

Try to think, Fouquet. How have other prisoners that you have read of contrived to escape? There was the Count of Monte Cristo, now. How did he get away? Oh, yes, he was thrown into the sea for a corpse, having taken the place of the old man who dug the tunnel. Maybe—

Instinctively Fouquet's hand reached out and tapped on the wall. Pretty solid. Besides, he was nowhere near the sea, and even if there was another prisoner, he probably wouldn't die.

Then there were those three or four *misérables* whom the mob liberated from the Bastille. But, heavens! That was in 1789, and this is only 1661. No hope that way, Fouquet.

Malvolio? His situation was much the same as yours. But he deserved it, didn't he? But then, don't you deserve this? What! To allow twenty years to pass without once thinking of your son! To grow rich and famous and powerful and not to help his mother! *Fi donc,* Fouquet-Champenois!

Lie in your corner and munch your bread, and grow bearded and rheumatic, for time is passing quickly at *la cour du Grand Monarque.*

XIII

Eh, bien oui! But now 1661, now 1667, and now 1684! For who is this good-looking, middle-aged woman who has invaded the field? Is she not "Esther" de Maintenon? All roads lead to Rome, and all of Louis' favorites led to La Maintenon. For when Marie Thérèse died, "Esther" married the King, and reigned for thirty years the uncrowned Queen of France. And he who was the champion philanderer of the world settled down and became a model of conjugal propriety.

But why has she come so soon? La Montespan has hardly become installed, and things are running very smoothly. La Maintenon is not needed, nor is she desired. Dubois is questioned. He is surprised, and orders her away. But she already has the ascendancy over His Majesty, and refuses to go.

And so the days roll by, swiftly for Louis and his court, but slowly, oh, so slowly, for Champenois. And finally his disappearance gets in the papers. La Maintenon sees the article, and rushes with it to the King. That night Fouquet hears voices outside his door, then the turning of the key in the lock, and in the light of a lantern three figures.

"Give me the lantern," says one.

"Don't open until we call," says the other.

Two of the figures enter, both with cloaks before their faces. The other closes the door, and he hears the key turned.

"Who are you?" said Fouquet hoarsely.

Slowly one of the intruders advanced and held the lantern to the face of the prisoner. The unaccustomed light made the sunken eyes blink.

"Is it he?"

"Ah, oui!"

"Who are you!" cried Fouquet again.

"Can you not guess—Eugéne?"

"Léonie!"

"Then you do remember me?"

"Why not?"

"I thought for all these years you had forgotten me."

"Léonie! Oh, I'm so stiff, so weak! Have pity, Léonie, have pity!"

"Drink some of this."

"No, no, it's poisoned!"

"Very well."

"But give it to me! Give it to me! I don't care! I'm dying anyway!"

He seized the flask and put it to his lips.

"Don't drink too much."

The brandy did him good. He straightened up and faced them.

"Or ca, que veux-tu?"

The interview was brief, but to the point. Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon demanded a hundred thousand francs for Fouquet's liberty. Fouquet eagerly promised it. They gave him paper and pen and ink, and he wrote to Dubois to bring it in American money. In return they allowed him to have a hot bath and sleep in a bed.

XIV

"THEN you do not believe he was insane, Monsieur le Directeur?"

"He was undoubtedly insane at first, Monsieur Dubois, but I think he regained his sanity."

"But how could he do that?"

"It is very simple. Many cases of insanity are traceable to what we call the sex complex. In fact, Freud attributes the origin of most mental diseases to this instinct. Now, the patient to whom you refer was, as you say, extremely homely and repulsive, and was at the same time a highly sexed young man. He seems also to have been studious, his studies naturally taking the direction of his complex—hence his thorough knowledge of that amorous king, Louis XIV. We can easily believe that such a patient would not be satisfied with any but a genuine love, which was impossible for him on account of his repulsive personality. Consequently there arose a conflict between his erotic instincts and reality; that is, a struggle between the complex and the more rational processes of the patient's mind. I should say that the patient succeeded in repressing the complex, as we say; in other words, he managed to erase it from his consciousness.

"But, when he went to Versailles, and found himself in the bedchamber of Louis XIV, the memory of all that he had read of the love affairs of that king must have revived the complex with greater emotional intensity—so much so that he thought he himself was Louis XIV. Seeing the bed was a sufficient stimulus to cause him to undress and get into it. Of course, when he was arrested his complex had obtained complete mastery of his personality, and he explained his treatment by a process of rationalization—that is, he accounted for these events, which were so incompatible with his idea that he was king, by believing that he was being persecuted. Now, when he was installed in the chateau, and the incompatibility which existed between his complex and his environment was reduced to a minimum, there was no longer a conflict, and his insanity died a natural death."

"And when do you think that happened?"

"I should say that the first evidence of his returned sanity was when he

wrote for his mother to join him."

Monsieur Dubois rose to go.

"Thank you very much, Monsieur le Directeur."

"It is nothing at all, Monsieur. *A propos,* Monsieur, what has become of your friend, Monsieur Champenois? He seemed so interested in insanity. I have not seen him for a long time."

"Oh," said Monsieur Dubois, "Monsieur Champenois has turned his attention to prison reform."

CURSE O' DREAMS

By William Drayham

OH, me of little worth!—The busy noises of day-break come in at my window, the whistle of men and young boys striding away to work, the neighing of horses, the singing of women—Oh, me of little worth!

All day they toil in the fields and the factories. All day like engines they labor and toil. . . . For them is no beauty. Their life is eating and sleeping. Their hearts wither like hay. All day like engines they toil in the fields.

And I! Gladly would I labor from dawning to sunset. I have tried often. I have tried to forget my dreams and toil like an engine. . . . I have seized hatchet and ax. . . . I have stood all day in the sun working the wheatfields. . . . I have taken up tools.—But my dreams call me away.

I cannot toil like an engine—Oh, me of little worth! My dreams call me away. . . . I must be dreaming of worlds and plunging stars, red fires of sunset, faces of ladies, whispering of old voices, and music of woods. . . .

The wistful songs of evening make my heart sad. . . . Thunder and high wind give me wings of a sea-gull. . . . I must be dreaming of moonlight and ladies of *temps jadis*. . . .

I have tried to work all day like an engine, but my dreams call me away

THE theory of reincarnation runs aground on the puzzle as to what most men did in the last life to deserve being what they are in this one.

A MAN'S a man until he marries—then he becomes his wife's husband.

THE COWBOY

By Carl Mahl

TERROR for the first time clutched at the heart of Isobel Vanderburen as she felt the tawny earth sliding under her. Her mustang was running wild.

Behind her rolled a drab cloud of alkali dust; before her stretched the cactus-dotted plain; beneath her panted the vicious mustang, reveling in the frailty of the slender arms that tugged at his bit; and over all, out of a blue sky, glared the sun. Isobel screamed, and screamed again. The sound was choked as suddenly as if it had been uttered in a void.

Fear makes the mind move swiftly. Why had she heedlessly mounted this broncho and trotted off the ranch without an escort, without a word, she, the lilyfoot from the East? Where was he taking her? When would he tire? Would he buck? As quick as her thought he did buck, jerking toward the right; and just as quickly did her fists, clenched over the reins, squeeze the horn of the saddle. She screamed again and the broncho answered by tearing off across the prairie.

From her careening mount Isobel saw a dot moving on the brow of a knoll ahead and then sink out of sight. Again it appeared and, bobbing along, grew into the figure of a cowboy loping across her path on a rangy horse and idly twirling his lariat. Maybe it was instinct that caused him to look around, for the girl's scream had not reached his ears. Isobel saw him bend forward in the saddle, saw his cowpony skim across the ground to intercept her—and felt with panic her broncho square off at right angles.

"Hol' on to that leather!" came a voice. She let go the reins and clung to the pommel desperately.

Then the mustang began to buck in earnest. Isobel was hanging on for life. Into her mind's eye flashed the scene of a funeral. It was her own. The hearse was standing at the curb before St. Thomas's and carriages were lined along Fifth Avenue as far as Forty-fifth Street. The organ—

She was slipping! Hoofs pounded behind her, a horse's head suddenly danced beside her, and she felt something strong, like steel, encircle her waist.

"Let go!" commanded the voice.

When Isobel opened her eyes her cheek was resting against a very warm and very dusty shirt. Her face was in the shade and a big sombrero was fanning her hot temples. She asked the orthodox question: "Where am I?"

"On the Broken-T Ranch," came in the same voice. "Feel better?"

"Yes."

"Where do you belong?" asked the voice after a pause. It was a soft voice, she reflected.

"I'm visiting on Colonel Aldrich's ranch. My horse—you saved my life." She opened her eyes. Her rescuer, supporting her with a knee and an arm, was looking into her face. His eyes were brown and shining; his locks, tumbling back from his bronzed forehead, were jet-black. It was a handsome face, if one could forget the nose.

"What is your name?" murmured Isobel. "I know you are a Virginian!"

"Naw," said the cowboy, blushing. "I'm from N' York. My name is Hyman Labovitz. . . . "

HIS UNERRING INTUITION

By Alan Dale

BRACEBRIDGE CHANCE believed in realism, and the scintillant success of his theatrical career was largely due to the obsession of this creed. If his scene were a hotel lobby, he would spend weeks perfecting every detail, in order to make the illusion complete. Twice he had staged a restaurant with magnificent results, and the most garish supper resort in Lobster Square had been studied as carefully as the humble eating house in the Bowery. The New York critics adored him. They devoted columns, flecked with adjectives and adverbs, to the recognition of his wonderful achievements. They called him a consummate master of detail, and many other suavely conventional things. They would rave about grease-spots on the wall paper of a cheap hotel, because those spots were so true and so well-thought-out; they would grow enthusiastic over the soiled collar of the hero because it showed that he had been sitting up all night in a railway train. These were the touches that had made Bracebridge Chance internationally famous. His reputation was secure. Others might imitate him —and did—but the fate of imitators is fortunately not a happy one.

The rehearsals of his new morality play had been going on for weeks, and it was a production that was confidently expected by Bracebridge Chance to enhance his reputation greatly. All his efforts were bent towards the selection of an admirable cast. Mr. Chance pinned very little faith to the commodity known as the metropolitan favorite. He preferred to make names, and he had made at least fifty, the owners of which, with characteristic ingratitude, had all left him. This opulent manager could take the dullest amateur and breathe vitality into him. Therefore all the dullest amateurs knocked perpetually at his door, and make his life miserable. To be taken up by Bracebridge Chance was a splendid thing.

The manager sat watching one of these rehearsals in a perplexed mood. Something was wrong. He had intuition—in fact, many declared that he was quite psychic—and trusted to it relentlessly. His stage manager dreaded Mr. Chance's intuition. Usually it meant endless annoyance. People with intuition are exceedingly irritating to those without it; in fact, intuition is only a shade less detestable than the theatrical horror called temperament.

"Something's wrong, Ben," shouted Mr. Chance, stopping the rehearsal. He passed his hand over his thoughtful brow, and seemed for a moment to enter into a trance.

Ben Harrison recognized these symptoms, and hated them. They were the precursors of trouble. He saw the governor in his apparent trance, and resented it. He had seen many of those trances, and knew them of old. He was a servile person, with the dormant spirit of the underling. His mission in life was to humor the governor, which was not always as simple as it sounds.

"I seem to see what it is, Ben," said Mr. Chance, in the tones of a spiritualistic medium. Again he passed his hand over his thoughtful brow. "I sense it. I do not know yet—this scene at the banquet table is lacking. Let me see. We have *A Pessimist, An Opti-*

mist, A Cynic, A Rake, A Dreamer, A Malefactor—they are all good. The two women at the top and bottom of the table seem to irritate me. They are meaningless—they are merely extra-ladies—they are out of place—"

"You mean *A Virgin* and *A Courtesan,* Mr. Chance?"

The manager awoke from his trance, and looked around solemnly.

"Exactly," he said intuitively. "The two women are wrong. They are musical comedy women. They are show girls, and perfectly out of their element in my theatre. I want types. I must have types. Neither character has a line to speak, but everything depends upon her demeanor. Who is *A Virgin?*"

"Miss Lee," replied the stage manager lugubriously.

"She doesn't look it," mused Mr. Chance dreamily. "Not at all."

Nobody smiled. At such moments as these a sense of humor would have been misunderstood, and the governor would have considered it flippant and reprehensible. Miss Lee herself was resolutely mute, even if she did regard Mr. Chance's remarks as aspersions upon her character—at least her stage character. She knew that she would never appear in this morality play, for the manager had judged her correctly. She was a show girl, and her livelihood was not endangered by his decision. She smiled somewhat contemptuously.

"*A Courtesan,* too," Mr. Chance went on, "is absurd. She is a jarring note. She looks like a New England schoolmarm. All she needs is spectacles, with a change of *coiffure* to bring New England right into our midst. Those agents *will* send me ridiculous people, and I must protest. Much depends, in this particular scene, upon these two characters, *A Virgin* and *A Courtesan.* The audience must recognize them instantly. What did Miss Lee do last season?"

Mr. Harrison consulted a note-book.

"She was one of the sirens in 'Bish! Bash! Bosh!' " he replied in a business-like way, but with difficulty, for "Bish! Bash! Bosh!" is not easy to say sedately. "And Miss Hill, who is cast for *A Courtesan,* played one of the prudes in Grufeld's Inanities—"

"Enough!" cried the manager irately, as he glared at the miscast ladies. "I can't endanger an important scene by such careless selection. *A Virgin* and *A Courtesan* have a definite meaning. The former must be a lovely young girl, with innocent, candid eyes, and blonde hair and—"

"Why blonde hair?" asked Mr. Harrison. He felt that he must say something, for the governor loved to suggest argument, and then squelch it. "Couldn't *A Virgin* be brunette?"

Bracebridge Chance was not at all amused, nor did he see any levity in the query.

"I prefer innocence with blonde hair," he said. "The brunette type is too flashy, though"—as if this were a great concession—"I have no doubt that there *are* innocent brunettes off the stage. On the stage, as you surely know, they are all adventuresses, or women with two or three pasts. We will select a brunette for *A Courtesan,* as a contrast. No"—Mr. Harrison was about to make a remark—"do not let us discuss it any further. I must think it out. It is a matter requiring very careful thought. These parts must be played by women unknown to the public. Hold yourself in readiness, Ben, to go with me, and find the types we need. You remember how we discovered little Mike Dooley in Mutton-Chop Thomas' eating house in the Bowery, when I produced 'Woman Yet Lady'? There was a hit for you! Suppose I had gone to one of those silly schools of Dramatic Art—ha! ha! —or to one of the ridiculous societies for making actors—impossible! Let me see"—and the trance-like look came into his eyes again—"there's a restaurant on the East Side, I believe, where society people go in the conviction that they are slumming. Types of all sorts, they tell me, abound there, and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if we discovered *A Virgin* and *A Courtesan* without any trouble in that very place."

II

In New York, where everybody's idea is to look as much like everybody else as possible, it is, of course, exceedingly difficult to find types. The real American considers it an insult to be a type—which is quite natural. He does not precisely model himself after his betters, for he has none, but he does endeavor, both in his dress and in his demeanor, to conform to general rules.

In London and in Paris you find types without looking for them, for they are the results of an older civilization. In New York they are rare, and mostly imaginary, and for the reason that we are inclined to admire what we do not possess, New York loves types, and clever people with commercial instincts invent them.

Little Bohemia, in Rivington Street, just off the Bowery, was the latest resort to which the fatigued patrons of the monotonous, unvarying restaurants of Lobster Square journeyed for a change. It was supposed to be exceedingly Bohemian, but if that had really been the case it would have died a quick death. Bohemia in New York is as impossible as Utopia would be in Hades. This Bowery resort, however, was patronized very extensively by New Yorkers who admired the theory of Bohemia, though they would have loathed it in practice, and as it was quite expensive, in a surreptitious way, its vogue was great. The proprietor could have afforded all the appurtenances of the finest uptown café, but Bohemia called for gas instead of electric light, black-handled knives instead of ivory from Sheffield, and a floor covered with sawdust rather than with Persian rugs. After all, Bohemia must put up some sort of a bluff.

Bracebridge Chance, in his shabby best-suit, and Ben Harrison in his natty worst-suit, sat and studied Little Bohemia on the night following the rehearsal. A steaming plate of spaghetti, which for some occult reason is always considered Bohemian in New York, sent fragrant gusts to their Broadway nostrils, and looked very formidable. The dining crowd was disgustingly sedate, and listened to the eternal rag-time music that, in Manhattan, is the life. Bohemia could invent nothing worse even if it tried—and it didn't! Every table was occupied. There were a few very nearly Americanized French and Italians, who would have been looked upon as absolutely Americanized in Paris or Naples. The rest were Americans, all dressed in the prevailing styles. A few of the women wore evening dress of the most diaphanous description, and some of the men were there in Tuxedo coats. They sat there as though they expected that something would happen—something exciting and unusual—but, of course, nothing of the sort did, could, or would happen. It was all eminently respectable and amazingly dull.

Ben Harrison sighed. He hated it, for it seemed so uninspiring. Moreover, spaghetti always gave him indigestion, and he rebelled at it. The governor's indigestion was mental rather than physical. All the women seemed fat and hungry, and all the men fatter and hungrier. There was a smug, domestic air about it all.

The greasy waiters plied them with dish after dish, each less Bohemian than the other, and the foody odor had nearly assumed material shape, when Bracebridge Chance's attention was arrested by a girl who had just entered, accompanied by a woman very much older, to occupy a table vacated a few minutes earlier. She was young, pretty, blonde, blue-eyed, and as she took her seat she looked neither to the right nor to the left. Her companion was equally detached in manner. Mr. Chance's intuition leaped, if one may say it, and the dreamy, trance-like look came into his eyes.

"Ben, there is my *Virgin*," he said tremulously. "Look at her—her eyes cast down, her manner repressed, gentle, deferential—the very type!"

Mr. Harrison did not seem unduly impressed. His ideas on guilelessness

were vague. The girl, he thought, looked rather foolish, but he had heard of foolish virgins. Perhaps she was that.

Bracebridge Chance signed his name, known all over the world, to a slip of paper, requesting a few minutes of her valuable time, and one of the greasy waiters carried it to the girl. She looked up when she had read it, and met the eye of the intuitive manager; then she said a few words to her companion. Who shall know—who shall ever know—what those words were? Mr. Chance noticed the brief interchange of words and intuitively set it down to the surprise of blushing maidenhood. Then the girl gave him a timid smile—so timid that it could scarcely be called a smile—and intimated that he might speak to her.

He went at once to her table, and sat down. His manner was even more deferential than hers, and it was picturesque and impressive. He did not want to frighten the little thing, and of course, to be suddenly confronted by a famous manager must be disconcerting—

"This is it," he said very gently. "Miss—er—"

"Louisa Lamb," she replied in a girlish treble, "and my companion is Mrs. Luckstone."

Bracebridge Chance smiled at the simplicity of her tones. Then he went on: "I don't want an actress, Miss Lamb, but I do want you to appear in my morality play, that I produce next month, because you thoroughly look the part that I intend you to play. There are no lines. You just appear at a banquet scene as *A Virgin.*"

"As a what?" cried Mrs. Luckstone, in a voice that sounded harsh.

"I think I understand," said little Miss Lamb. "You want me to appear as—er—innocence, I think, do you not? Oh, I should love it. I am *so* fond of the theater, and especially of yours, Mr. Chance. At least"—and she cast down her eyes in that fascinatingly arch way of hers—"I do look the part, and who knows but that some day I may become a great actress and do wonderful things?"

She gazed at him with joyous, baby-eyes, and the great manager flashed a look at Ben Harrison which said as plainly as words could have done, "Always trust my intuition." Then he proceeded to talk business, though he felt certain that she would neither understand nor appreciate it. Bracebridge Chance was always willing to pay lavishly for what he wanted. The little girl looked almost terrified as he mentioned the sordid matter of salary, but her companion, Mrs. Luckstone—well, really Mr. Chance thought she was going to prove troublesome. Possibly she knew nothing of the stage, and thought that every actress received fabulous remuneration.

However, it was all very pleasantly arranged, and when Mr. Chance rejoined his faithful stage manager the deal was closed. He had found his *Virgin* in Little Bohemia. As he left the table he heard Mrs. Luckstone—intuitively he deemed her a horrid woman—order a Scotch high-ball. Later on he saw her toss it down, and he could not help noticing that little Miss Lamb, as she sipped her ice-water, looked a trifle disgusted at the older woman. Dear little thing! Mr. Chance, though fifty-five, had not ceased to be susceptible.

III

Bracebridge Chance was greatly relieved, and the search for *A Courtesan* worried him very little. It was so much easier, he realized, to find *A Courtesan* than *A Virgin,* the conventional—I say conventional—attributes of innocence being somewhat unusual. The most guileless maiden, in real life, is not at all anxious to look the part, and the modern edicts of fashion militate against this. The most pellucid reluctance is scarcely proof against the ridiculously short, flaring skirts, and the flashy *toque* hats that girlhood affects this season. With Louisa Lamb, Mr. Chance felt that he could not possibly

go wrong—that is to say, his production could not possibly go wrong—and his prophetic eye saw her in future stage work, developed under his admirable coaching, as the most promising of *ingénues*. Later on, he thought that he might be able to use her in a very startling and singularly unique little play that he had accepted, called "Unconsciously a Mother."

The next night the manager and his dutiful accomplice supped at an uptown restaurant, popularly supposed to be frequented by the *demi-monde,* and he foresaw no difficulties in the way of discovering there *A Courtesan.* In fact, he felt that he could conveniently check his intuition at the door, with his hat and overcoat, and be extremely comfortable without it, for at times it was quite burdensome.

The big restaurant was filled with an after-theater crowd—the people who patronize the drama for the sake of the supper that succeeds it, as an unfailingly joyous epilogue. The air was hot and heavy, and there was an obstreperously blatant cabaret performance that gave to the place the necessary chaotic touch. The artistic soul of Bracebridge Chance was tortured as he surveyed this hideous burlesque on amusement. It was with difficulty that he could sit there in this abominable and aggressive Bedlam; nor was he particularly anxious to be noted as among those present.

"The quest of the golden girl isn't pleasant," said Ben Harrison wittily, but his humor fell flat. The governor was in no mood for such remarks, and he merely frowned. It was all very sordid, and vulgar and expensive, and the New York idea of enjoyment offended him. He regarded it contemptuously. Even the members of the *demi-monde* must hate themselves for countenancing such crass stupidity as this, he imagined.

However, the thought of his mission brought him solace, and very soon he saw the type that appealed to him. At an adjacent table was a large woman whose dark hair was nearly concealed by one of those enormous floppy hats with which maturity seeks to convey the opposite idea. The woman was handsome in a spectacular, Hippodromic manner. Her cheeks were very red, and her lips crimson. He noticed that she frequently replaced their constantly vanishing crimson, with a gilt-covered stick of lip rouge that she, quite ostentatiously, removed from her gold-mesh vanity bag. Three men sat with her, and talked loudly and persistently. A bottle of champagne, reposing in a cooler at the side of the table, never reposed there very long. They were all distinctly merry, or noisy at any rate, which, in restaurants of this description, is the same thing.

It was Ben Harrison who was assigned to visit this table, and make known the governor's mission—a delicate mission, under the circumstances, and one calling for diplomacy. Mr. Chance looked away while negotiations were proceeding. In fact, he could not endure to watch his stage manager. People of that sort were so difficult to deal with. The modern Marguerite Gautier, he knew, was a lady of good clothes, bad manners, and slang.

He was surprised when he found that she had left the three men at her table, and was deliberately accompanying Ben Harrison. Mr. Chance grew nervous. Suppose she made a scene, or laughed at him, which *would* be making a scene! The stage manager, however, winked assuringly and evidently indicated that diplomacy had been successful. The manager rose, politely extended his hand—he had no real scruples in the matter of soiled doves—and motioned to her to be seated.

It was she who spoke first, and her voice was smooth, pleasant, and even cultured.

"You really want me—*me!*—to appear in one of your plays?" she asked, and she smiled.

"Only in a very silent way," replied Mr. Chance awkwardly. "You see, it is a morality play—I don't know if you realize what that is—"

"Oh, quite!" she said. "Quite!"

He was disconcerted by her "Quite!" It was not at all likely that she knew, but women of her stamp hate to admit ignorance. So he proceeded to explain vaguely the purport of the play, and the significance of its characters. It seemed absurd to be sitting there with such a woman, actually explaining a morality play.

"I want you for the part of *A Courtesan,*" he ventured timidly, "and I'm sure you'll suggest it—that is to say, look it—that is to say, be clever enough to play it." He stammered dreadfully. "You know, I suppose, what we call a courtesan?"

She laughed quite gaily. "Oh, quite!" she said, "Quite. I really am not at all ignorant, even if I look it. Of course, you mean—"

"Exactly," he interrupted quickly. (He nearly said "Quite.") He had an awful idea that she was going to use a fearful word, which would have shocked his æstheticism, and that was why he interrupted her so quickly.

"Well," she said blandly, "I should think that it would be tons of fun—a perfectly gorgeous experience. Oh, I should adore it, Mr. Chance. Am I really—really—the type?"

He was silent. After all, it is a bit difficult for a man to tell a woman that she is the type of a courtesan. It sounds so—er—unchivalrous! But she remained waiting for his answer, and at last he nodded assent.

"Oh, I am so glad," she said—and really he felt quite shocked at her complete lack of delicacy. "You know I'm not a New Yorker, Mr. Chance. I know very little about the theater here, though yours, of course, is famous all over the United States. I am merely in New York at the present time for—"

He put up his hand to check her confidence. Such women were always ready to unbosom themselves upon the slightest provocation, but there was nothing that he wanted to hear.

"Your name?" he asked.

"Tiny Thompson," she replied seriously, "but I do not insist upon it. You can call me anything you like. I have no objection to a *nom de théâtre.*"

A *nom de théâtre,* and pronounced quite correctly, too! These women reflect the education of their companions, he thought astutely. Tiny Thompson's coat of veneer was probably the result of years of indiscriminate association. He was quite pleased with her. The interview had not been nearly as painful as he had anticipated. When the final points had been settled, Ben Harrison led her back to her companions, who greeted her noisily. He watched them as she seemed to explain the results of her chat, and he noticed that they all grew silent, and that no more champagne was ordered. As he left the restaurant he bowed to her, and the smile she gave him was not without its appeal. Though fifty-five, he had not ceased to be susceptible. In widely different ways, he was delighted with both *A Virgin* and *A Courtesan.* A really susceptible manager can appreciate both types, and sometimes he does.

IV

THE production of "Every Person" —for such was the title of the morality play—proved to be a tremendous success. The critics praised it not so much for what they understood, as for what they didn't understand. That is the beauty of a morality play. It means everything or nothing—usually nothing, so it succeeds. They absolutely gloated over the types. Nobody but Bracebridge Chance could have selected such a perfectly admirable cast, and have produced the play with such a wealth of detail. Each actor seemed to live the part assigned to him. It was real, it was vivid, it was graphic—and so on and so forth. There was not a jarring note. What would such a risky experiment have proved in any other manager's hands? Its failure would have been immediate. One false step, and the whole fabric would have crumbled. "Every Person" realized the true mission of the theater, which, of course, was educational! . . .

Even Bracebridge Chance smiled at

that. He liked it, of course, but it appealed to a sense of humor that emerged only when he read criticisms of his own productions. They were really so droll, and he knew them even before they were written.

The second matinee had just been played to a house crowded with eager women, and Mr. Chance, in his sanctum, had already begun to think out some of the wealth of detail connected with the production of "Unconsciously a Mother," when Ben Harrison burst in, without knocking at the door, and stood before him, the picture of deeply rooted woe.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Governor," he said, and the agitation in his voice caused Mr. Chance to realize that the visit had particular importance. "There's been a dreadful row in the dressing rooms—a regular brawl, and I want your immediate attention. The *Virgin* is drunk — really staggering drunk—and her language has been so dreadful, so abusive and obscene, that the *Courtesan* has given in her notice, and won't go on to-night."

He paused for breath, and the manager gasped.

"You've got it wrong, surely," he said. "You mean that the *Courtesan* is —er intoxicated, and that the *Virgin* has given in her notice. I might have expected something of the sort, but it is very annoying—"

"I mean nothing of the sort," interrupted Ben Harrison testily. "Come and see for yourself. All the people are demoralized. Such a scene in *your* theater, too! Oh, if anything of this got into the papers, I can see where we'd be! The profanity of that *Virgin* beats anything I've ever heard in all my life, and I'm no novice."

Bracebridge Chance dashed aside the manuscript of "Unconsciously a Mother" and followed his stage manager behind the scenes. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his own eyes and ears. All the actors, in various conditions of undress, stood outside their dressing rooms, listening to a volley of obscenity that proceeded from the room shared by the *Virgin* and the *Courtesan*. Mr. Chance shivered. Chills ran down his spine, as he heard expressions that are usually indicated by dashes.

As he stood there, Miss Tiny Thompson, in her *Courtesan* clothes, appeared from the room, and rushed up to him. She was sobbing vehemently, and tears made furrows in the make-up that she had not yet removed.

"I—I've f-finished with this s-sort of thing," she said, struggling for composure. "I—I've not been accustomed t-to the language of the g-gutters, Mr. Chance. I—thought I was in a respectable theater, but n-now I d-don't believe that there is such a thing. I'm a school-teacher, and a woman of some refinement—I'm from B-Boston. When you asked me to appear as a *Courtesan*, I thought it was going to be an amusing experience, and I took a holiday. What a holiday! The three school-teachers you saw me with that night warned me. I'm bound to say that! To be insulted as I've been insulted, by that shameless inebriated creature in there—"

"Say, you blooming set of pie-faces" —the voice from the dressing room seemed to issue from the floor, and the overwhelmed manager easily recognized it, in spite of its hiccough, as that of the *Virgin*—"come in here and help a lady to get up. I can't seem to find my feet. This is a h—l of a joint, I don't think. Say you, any of you, hand me the bottle and let me get this rotten job out of my system."

This is an expurgated and paraphrased version of what Bracebridge Chance, Ben Harrison, and the assembled members of the "Every Person" company heard.

"Get her out of the theater, and get her out quickly," cried Mr. Chance in dismay. "Give her the money due to her, and if she shows up to-night, don't let her enter."

At that moment the *Virgin* appeared at the door of the dressing room, holding tightly to it for support. Her dishevelled condition was so awe-inspiring that Bracebridge Chance saw in her no indication of the sweet little unsophis-

ticated maiden whom his "intuition" had selected at Little Bohemia. She suggested the lowest element of the East Side, in its very lowest state. Not a vestige of that admirable simplicity was left. The *Courtesan* still sobbed violently, and between sobs announced her intention of writing her experiences, which was, of course, an awful threat.

"Let two of the extra ladies go on for these parts to-night," said Bracebridge Chance to his stage manager, "and to-morrow I'll see what I can do. I'll try and find suitable people—"

"Do you mean to say that you are going to look for more types?" asked Ben Harrison grimly.

The manager withered him with a glance. "Be careful to see that nobody mentions this unlucky occurrence," he said with dignity that never evaded him. "Don't let the newspaper boys get on to it."

"There's a column article in to-night's *Moon*," murmured Ben Harrison maliciously. "It is headed 'Bracebridge Chance's Unerring Intuition.'"

"Excellent," cried the manager, forgetting his troubles, and regaining his mental equilibrim. "Don't forget to cut it out and paste it in the scrap-book, and Ben—tell Jim to buy a hundred copies at once, before the edition is sold."

CERTAIN AMERICAN POETS

By Odell Shepard

THEY cowered inert before the study fire
While mighty winds were ranging wide and free,
Urging their torpid fancies to aspire
With "Euhoe! Bacchus! Have a cup of tea."

They tripped demure from church to lecture-hall,
Shunning the snare of farthingales and curls.
Woman they thought half angel and half doll,
The Muses' fane a boarding-school for girls.

Quaffing Pierian draughts from Boston pump,
They toiled to prove their homiletic art
Could match with nasal twang and pulpit thump
In maxims glib of meeting-house and mart.

Serenely their bovine admirers graze—
Apollo wears frock-coats, the Muses stays.

WHAT gives a woman more pleasure—to look at a plain woman, or to gaze at a handsome man?

EVERYBODY SAYS I'M QUEER

By Helene Hicks Bowen

EVERYBODY says I'm queer, and they point significantly to their heads when my name is mentioned.

I don't like People; they talk too much and I never agree with anything they say. People patronize me, and oh, how they bore me!

I don't like Men; they are creatures of one idea, and when incapacitated for that they become anile.

I don't like Children; they are too young, and they are selfish, and greedy, and dishonest. Children have all the faults of adults without the acquired grace to hide their shamelessness.

I don't like Servants; their unfaltering superiority makes me feel groveling and apologetic.

I don't like Society; it is a game originated for the purpose of killing time for the mentally undeveloped.

I don't like Matrimony; it is an ideal theory which fails when applied to practical existence.

I don't like Mountains; they are out of all proportion to humanity, and they shut off the sun, making the dear days too short.

I don't like to play Golf; it is hateful to be distracted from the glories of the earth and sky by a dog-sized ball.

I don't like to Travel; the herding of sexes together in a sleeping car is unutterably indelicate, and sight-seeing is a form of entertainment suited only to the lowest order of intelligence.

I don't like Small Towns; they cramp humanity into the groove of petty materialism.

I don't like Automobiles; they are vulgar monstrosities crammed with hideous machinery; they eructate offensive odors and bark obnoxiously; they have ruined the privacy of life in the country and viciously neighborized the recluse.

* * *

Everybody says I'm queer, and they point significantly to their heads when my name is mentioned.

I like to Walk through the woods in Autumn, followed by the whisper of dead leaves.

I like to Drive a gentle horse along a lane which twists and winds like a gigantic bolt of ribbon flung across the open country.

I like to Sew; not embroidered fripperies, but simple needlework, placing tiny stitches one after another for an interminable stretch.

I like to work, because the sense of successful accomplishment is the keenest pleasure life has to offer.

I like to Swim, because the embrace of cool, buoyant water is as sensuously delicious as the kiss of clinging silk.

I like Flowers, because they so joyously spend the perfume of their brief existence to make the world happier.

I like the Rain, Mother Nature's shower-bath, because all cleanliness is sweet, and it gives me a good excuse to stay indoors and loaf.

I like a Gray Day, because its restful atmosphere is full of color, floating wisps of opalescence faintly merging into the pearled mystery of low-hanging clouds.

I like the Country, because it is the House Beautiful wherein dwelleth My Lord Sun with his capricious Mistress, that mischievous romp, Madame Wind.

I like the City, because it is man's

most stupendous manifestation of his likeness to the Creator.

I like Pictures, because they are so many windows opening into the souls of men.

I like Books, because they contain the essence of human spirit shaken free from the drag of the flesh.

I like Music, because it is "experience with the sting extracted"; its crashing harmonies are interwoven happiness and pain, misery and madness, ecstasy and delirium, aspiration and spirituality, melodiously keying the human soul to a supreme sentience, with no aftermath of sorrow.

* * *

Everybody says I'm queer, and they point significantly to their heads when my name is mentioned.

CHIVALRY

By Frank Donshea

MR. CLANCEY, sprawling over two seats, was reading "Idylls of the King" in the subway. As King Arthur's court reconstructed itself before him, the roar of the train became subdued, far-away.

There were the stalwart knights assembling 'round their liege, who sat on a raised throne and smiled and nodded in his frank, kingly way. There in the gallery were the gaily-beauteous ladies—each gazing fondly, with adoration at some gallant, but changing to cool regard as his glance searching eagerly, asked favor from her eyes. Through all the hum of voices. But hush! the King is speaking:

"My brave companions," he says, his voice rising pleasantly. "Who will fight in the cause of a helpless—and most beautiful—maiden?"

The hall rings as with acclamation. Then thus the King:

"Sir Gawain, let yours be the cause."

Striking sword upon shield that valiant one replies—

* * * * * *

The train lurched around a curve and a dainty shoe found on Mr. Clancey's number twelve a momentary base of support. Mr. Clancey cut short the woman's apology—as if it could help!

"Look where you're goin'," he exclaimed angrily.

THE only man who doesn't prove that he is a fool at least forty times a day is the deaf-and-dumb man—and he always *looks* it.

NO man can ever hope to understand a woman. Neither, for that matter can the woman herself.

THE GIRL AND THE GIANT

By Marshall Hugh Irish

THIS is a story of unhuman bigness and of something else—especially of something else. They were not in apposition, the bigness and the something else, but in opposition. The story is almost one of an irresistible force meeting an immovable body; and you know the philosophers have fussed over what would happen in such a case.

No one, on reading this, need hurry to introduce a bill into the legislature for the reform of railroad junction facilities. This happened some time ago, and I have a thought that the facilities might have been mended since. But at the time, and at a given point in a given southern state, conditions were exactly as set forth.

We were on our way to Florida, as most everybody is, at some time in life. One Great System (so it was called, in the time folders) marooned us in a pine-girt hamlet for two hours or so, until we could be taken up by another Great System. We were not a party, but discreet travelers, when we entered the forlorn village. We were a party—and something else—when we left it.

When the train pulled out of the town, there wasn't much left. *John the Baptist,* with Mary Garden left out of the cast, would be a fair simile. We all felt just a little stranded, I should think. We poked about, each for himself, among the diverting and diverse merchandise heaped at random under the ten-foot eaves of the long passenger-freight depot. It was hot in the men's waiting-room. There was no talk between us, except casually when two of us met on the platform, or was attracted to the same commercial curio in the mass of freight. We were five, as to number, and, rather than stop in the midst of something exciting to do so, I will describe the other four now.

First, there is the Yellow Man. Always, he is first. Now, don't jump to the conclusion that his yellowness betokened mixture of blood. He would hunt you and I both down, if I let you get that notion. He was merely sallow. A Floridan, he was, and had been up in eastern Tennessee, on some rare matter of business. A queer duck, was the Yellow Man, with cheek-bones that, while not high, yet gave his face a squarish look, somehow. Taciturn, and beardless as an oriental, finishes him, except a something about him which you could not see, yet knew to be there. Then, there was the man loaded by Nature to be a bank president, who had missed fire—on everything but the dignity. No clergyman of Brattle Street could have fished out of the sea of English more sonorosity than did he. The Chinless One comes next, in interest, with the Average Citizen bringing up the rear, unless I assign that position to myself.

It's a-weary, waiting for a train. Therein lurks a well-defined category of sensations, at its head, hunger—or rather a wish to see food before you, to fuss with it. No one knows why, unless it be the physio-psychologists, and we don't want to go into that. The fact remains that one can not wait long for a train without thinking of food. There was no lunch counter at the station, but the station agent, with an I-assure-you-Gentlemen-on-my-word-of-honor look on his face, pointed out an alleged eating-house, about a

block and a half nor' by nor'west. We set out for it, *en bloc,* bound together by a tie more universal than brotherhood, common interest or peril.

It was a queer town. Strangers from the North should never have been allowed to run at large there, and the Yellow Man should have had the Twilight Sleep between trains. About two chains and eight links from the station, we drew near to something that at once relieved our tedium and assuaged our hunger. At a little distance ahead, we saw a great hodge-podge of negroes drifting aimlessly along the street toward us. There's nothing much to that, but wait; I have merely given you the setting, the ground relief, as yet. Towering from the center of the saturnalian group, and almost double its average height, loomed and swayed and swaggered a round-shouldered, living monolith. It was Gog or Magog in black. Not an inch less, was he, than the fabulous giants of old. He could not have been over nine feet high—I say *high,* not tall—nor less than eight; nor over four hundred nor under three hundred and fifty pounds in weight. Within these limits, your imagination may roam *ad lib.* Neither obese nor spare, was this sable prodigy, and there was in the attitude of the other blacks toward him a suggestion—though of course they did not actually do so—of clinging to his legs and arms, like kittens to a friendly mastiff. I never saw another such man. I believe he would have looked in keeping astride the Trojan Horse.

The whole pack of them was jabbering in drink. There was enough *vino* in the group to give the *veritas* about the Mexican situation, if it could be directed to that end. We were at no pains to diagnose the case. One senses liquor, in its exhilarating stage, almost occultly. As far back as somewhere in Kentucky, a conductor on the train had told me that the whiskey miscalled moonshine though made on dark nights was only sixty per cent. At my what-d'ye-mean, he laughingly explained that he meant sixty per cent trouble. Some way, this idle quip came to me now, increasing my unease. Had I been alone, I think I must have returned to the station to set my watch, so as to make sure of catching the coming train. But, being five, I—we—could not go back. It's odd, the number of things one man can do that five can not.

The roisterers saw us coming, and stopped: rather, they drifted gradually to a standstill, like blackbirds about spilled grain. Their huge centerpiece leaned slightly forward, swaying his great face to and fro very unintelligently. The Chinless One sifted unobtrusively to the rear of our column. The Average Citizen was fitly in the center, beside me, while the Yellow Man and Dignity led the van. Poor Dignity! He couldn't give an inch. He had to act like the Yellow Man felt.

We became the subject of the negroes' very audible remarks, as we passed, and our family trees suffered shockingly in their discourse. In fact, there was a bleak unanimity of epithet among them, though a wide gamut of vocal register. We heard our parentage disparaged in every tone from chest to falsetto. Strangely enough, they did not look directly at us while discussing our forebears, except to glare briefly now and then, but spoke as to each other. I fancied a little ochre in this.

We were for ignoring the incident, or I was, at least. There seemed a tacit consent among us that the thing, though appearing very irregular to us, might be, after all, merely a custom of the land. At any rate, it was clearly irremediable. So we passed sedately on, and would, I believe, have escaped with this slight dent in our *amour propre,* but for the Yellow Man. I had noticed that his face was getting yellower and yellower through it all, and before we could get away from our harriers, he allowed one searing anathema to escape from lips slightly a-snarl.

Then things happened. The taunt was the signal for a terrific enveloping movement on the part of the dark men. They followed us. They crowded our

left wing and our rear. They leaned toward us, calling loudly their irrepeatable war cry. We were in a great uproar, Magog, a quarter couchant, loped beside us like an enraged ostrich. I imagined I could feel his hot breath on my neck, and thought to have him lift me up like a jumping-jack. He had caught the rondo of the others, too. His voice was Caruso's in a cistern. We moved along briskly, now—it had to be done—pushing the half-mad Yellow Man, who had turned to face the foe, backward before us. The Chinless One had gravitated to the right wing, and was hugging the picket fence.

We reached the eating-house, confusedly, and ran up on its front porch like—well, like one would. All this is in a chaotic state in my mind. I can give only the salients. I know that just as we reached the door, some one inside was slamming it to in our faces. The bank president slammed it open again, with peerless dignity. We jammed through the aperture, dragging the Yellow Man with us, and found within a fairly fat and flabby man pushing on the door. It banged to after us, like the lid of a man-hole.

Followed a great tramping over the porch outside, and talk that would have disgraced the Lower House. We could scarcely hear each other shout. There were two small windows in the front of the building; but the panes were dusty, and the windows were more than half blocked with cracker-boxes, candy-jars, and what not. The negroes could not well see us. They had to see us, to remember their rage, I took it. They were like peccaries: no victim in sight, no grunts. So they swarmed down the house-walk, forty of them, at the least, to a large double window in the side of the house. At this they took pusher's turn, beside the giant and between his columnar legs, taking up again the subject of our unworthiness.

We were deucedly uncomfortable, The Chinless One looked to need a hypodermic, or at least some of the sixty per cent stuff effervescing without the window, while the Flabby Man who owned the place was virtually *in extremis*.

The Average Citizen looked palely at the Yellow Man, and called out to him above the clamor, in a voice that thrummed like a caught leaf in the wind:

"Well, you brought this drove down on us, so it ought to be up to you to go out and put away their Goliath."

This was unkind, I think, now, seeing that we had dragged the Yellow Man in with us.

"For two cents I'd—" The Yellow Man started toward the door, his hand in his hip pocket. I suppose he had there a thirty-two from the lower bureau drawer, nine years unfired. I would have wanted a mortar for the disintegrating of Magog.

The Flabby Man flattened himself against the closed door like a squatting goose, and faced the Yellow Man.

"They won't leave a shingle! Not a shingle!" he gasped. "And I've got to live here!"

It was a Macedonian cry. One would deserve rewards above shingles, to live there.

"Are there no officers?" I shouted loudly.

He shook his head. Too scared to speak, he looked, but he did summon enough vocal resource to wheeze out:

"He only comes to town once 'n a while, Saturdays."

His "he" could mean none but Magog, within miles of Crossways. And it *was* Saturday. I had thought Friday the day for mischance.

Meanwhile, the Yellow Man was pressing determinedly toward the door, and the Flabby Man was broadening and thinning to cover it. I don't know how this queer contest would have terminated, for at that moment the Average Citizen signaled us, with a motion of his head, to look toward the station.

Three women were making their way toward the eating-house, one considerably in the lead of the other two. I had seen this party leave the train and go into the ladies' waiting-room, but had

paid little heed. Thus we often overlook—but that's cogitation.

The sight of the approaching women must have sent our hearts throatwards an average of six inches. I saw the Chinless One swallowing. No man, however spineless or chinless, might remain safely indoors and see a potential mother of his race fall into the despoiling hands of a black mob. In that moment, I saw the scareheads of our fate, in the newspapers; saw the photograph my sweetheart would tearfully hand over to the reporters.

It was plain enough that the women knew nothing of the riot. They had evidently just come out of the waiting-room, on the farthest side of the station. The young girl in advance swung along as nonchalantly as a milkmaid in a high wind, glancing from side to side as though on the lookout for diversion. The two older women followed her more stiffly, and a thought reluctantly, I imagined. The younger of the two was clearly the girl's maid. The older might be any relative, an aunt, for choice.

When the negroes discovered the women, their tumult sank to a sudden silence, as does that of frogs when a stone is thrown into the pool. Their faces, such of them as I could see, took on a queer, cement-colored cast. This could mean many things; but I took it to mean one thing—the worst.

As the girl neared the eating-house, her roving gaze settled curiously on the group of blacks at the window. I'm quite sure, from the expression on her face, that she saw nothing in their assemblage save a possible strange usage of the province. For that matter, she must have seen in them, as had I, at first, little more than mere scale-figures for the estimating of the Colossus overtopping them. Her steps slowed, unconsciously, in her absorption, and at the end of the house-walk down which they stood she stopped, staring childishly, until the assumed aunt and the maid should come up with her.

She was dressed—but don't ask me how she was dressed. She was clothed in purple and fine linen, symbolically speaking. That, I absorbed. If I could give you the details of her dress, they would merely bring that superior smile to your lips which one has on looking at Dolly Madison's get-up, or that of a belle of the Sixties. This was some time ago, mind you. Women's wear, like popular songs, rapidly passes into something akin to the ludicrous, or the pathetic. But she was lithe, and willowy, and medium tall, and she fairly glistened with animation. She looked like the Magazine Cover Girl, skating, though no one has ever skated in Crossways since the glacial epoch. Spoiled and only child of a gum, or soap, or some such, king, I classified her, with emphasis on the spoiled. I once knew of a man who, in order that his son might grow up to be like Napoleon, would allow no one to correct or restrain the lad in any way. The method didn't produce a Corsican, but that's neither here nor there. This sylph of the North had evidently been brought up in much the same way. As for Aunty and the maid, they are, and were, mere properties. The aunt was like an aunt, and the maid was equally typical.

When the aunt and the maid, following the girl's gaze with theirs, saw its gigantic objective, a look came into their eyes that nothing else, save a peep under Tophet's lid, could have brought to them. The aunt, especially, looked to have seen a Gorgon. One horrific instant they stood, stilly staring, and then, as though moved by twin propellers, hurried toward the girl.

She noted their acceleration and their expression. There was rescue in their every lineament. The girl stepped off the sidewalk in a way that made me fancy she had known domestic durance, and needed more of it.

"Myra! Myra!"

This from the aunt, in a half-voiced stage whisper. We could hear every syllable; for a marvelous stillness now reigned where before had been bedlam.

"Let's go and see him."

There was only one "him" in Crossways, and as the girl whispered the

giant's alias, she took one step sideways, another backward, and a third in a reeling half-turn down the house-walk, exactly as a loitering schoolgirl takes leave of her chum at the gate.

"Myra! I'll take you right back home, on the next train!" Aunt's guarded tones were quivering to a break.

"No, you won't. You wouldn't waste the tickets."

Aunt gave a plaintive little "o-h," long drawn out, half sigh, half sob.

The girl was perhaps a quarter of the way down the house-walk, now, still halting and turning. We were as hypnotized by the sudden thing as apparently were the negroes.

"Come on, Eulah,"—this, clearly, to the maid. "Maybe we can get *him* for footman."

"Myra! Don't you know what I—"

"Yes; but I ain't afraid," the girl interrupted, and veering, whimsically as a fitful breeze, she turned and skipped lightly down the walk, leaving the two women as whitely aghast as though she had leaped from a cliff.

Make your own theory as to why what followed followed. At least, don't ask me to speculate on it. The bank president—hours later—called it a "unique psychological phenomenon." You're welcome to that. There was in it something of the queen can do no wrong, of course; but more, I think, of the innate dominion of purity. At any rate, those negroes opened way for the girl, like subalterns for the Secretary of War: opened a pathway to the giant, and their mouths, slightly, the last in sheer funk, I took it. Magog seemed to realize that he was "It." That, and no more. He stood there, waiting, his eyes cast down, eight feet and more of hangdog abasement.

And up to him tripped that curiously elfin girl.

She was not so ready of word, now that she fronted her Titan. There wasn't, to the look, a milligram of self-consciousness in her; only an awed wonder, I'd say, at the stupendous proportions of the man. I saw her gaze, marveling.

"How big— How much do you weigh?" she gasped, at the end of her survey.

Not a word from the abashed Magog, nor from any of the other blacks. It was a shade queer, this silence. But it was all queer—*bizarre*. The negroes were just dead beat.

"How high are you? . . . Feet? . . . Inches?" she encouraged, like a teacher with a dull pupil.

Their silence was that of a herd of antelopes a-gaze.

"Can't you speak?" She leaned forward with a trace of the spitfire, at this sharp question.

Magog flinched, the mere bat of an eye; nothing more.

The girl stood in the deep silence in evident amaze, as one might on coming upon—say—a headless race. She reached up and took hold of the giant's stovepipe arm, above the elbow. Her slender, white fingers would not span a quarter of it.

"Wouldn't you like to go to Michigan, and be a footman?" she asked.

She might as well have asked him if he would like to go to Rajputana and be a Rajput.

Again she stood in thoughtful nonplus. Then, something very different came into her yellowish, greenish eyes. A few people there are who carry the naïve savagery of childhood into their teens, and through them. Such was this Princess of some House of Dollars, evidently. She had exhausted the legitimate resources of the *outré* situation, and should now have been ready to go; but she could not quit her victim without a final jab of the fire-stick. And she gave it with all the insolent contempt of a Papuan queen taking leave of a captive. Leaning her charming head forward, she wagged it to and fro a few times, and then stared steadily, as you have seen children or quarreling men glare defiance or contempt. Her piquant face was not three feet from the pumpkinlike visage of the giant negro.

At her boring gaze, the man raised his eyes in one fleeting, furtive glance, swift as the dart of a toad's tongue. Then he let them fall as quickly.

"Nigger!" she gibed, with no more than playful cruelty in her voice.

There was no response. The giant's attitude was perfectly that of a frightened schoolboy awaiting punishment.

"Big nigger! 'Fraidy!"

Not a herculean muscle moved.

She turned away, flightily, exactly as though she had instantly forgotten the whole thing—and she had. She tripped nimbly back along the walk, looking off sideways across town, as if for another plaything.

On reaching her reserves, who had, as it were, stayed safely in the trenches, she did not hurry back to the shelter of the station, though, to the look of it, Aunty and the maid did everything but drag her there. Aunty had reached a mild stage of St. Vitus. But their whispered threats and urgings, of which we could hear snatches, were futile. Princess went on westward on her rounds of the town, the others following doubtfully in her wake. We watched them down the street, saw the party stop, uncertainly, at Sidewalk's End, the girl pointing off across the railroad tracks, Aunty holding back as though she feared the row of shacks over there might house a gargantuan tribe. The council was resolved, finally, by the girl's leading the way, willowly, across the tracks.

Well, the war was over. That black bulk of a man hadn't a rag of the bully nor a tag of local renown left. True, his satellites didn't turn on him, as they might have done, fearing, possibly, a resurgence. Nevertheless, he was thoroughly a discredited champion, a dismantled hulk, and like a hulk he drifted away, indefinitely, while we were watching the girl lead her unwilling caretakers about town. We saw him come out of a ragged alley, later on, driving a pensive mule to a plaintive cart that no conservative insurance company would guarantee, at a ninety per cent premium, to carry him a mile. The far-flung, westward pines swallowed him. His courtiers also dispersed aimlessly. We saw little groups of them here and there about town, talking in apparently subdued tones, as though they had seen four moons.

So, you never know your luck, as Sir Gilbert says. Very different was our leisurely saunter back to the station, from what it must have been, wanting our incognizant deliverer. Minus her intervention, it could not have been less than an ignoble rout, with sticks and stones a-flying, even had the Flabby Man succeeded in flattening himself to an effective blockade of the Yellow Man. With the latter at large, we hadn't a chance. I'm serious in that. We were exactly in line to get ignominously killed. One shot from the Yellow Man's ancient firearm, and it would have been pine coffins for the unidentified, as sure as Government Threes.

There was food for thought in this, and I munched it, musingly, in lieu of anything edible we might have got, and didn't, at the eating-house. The chance step of a gazelle might deliver an ant from the jaws of an ant-lion, and the matter make no impression on the gazelle. But what about the ant? This was like; and I was the ant.

"And she didn't know! She doesn't know! She never will know!" my faculty that picks up such odd bits of vertu kept crying out to me, as though it had found a Kohinoor.

The train was not long in coming, after that. In the interim, we let the town alone. As the engine panted to a stop beside the station, the Princess of Dollars danced out of the women's waiting-room, followed by Aunty and the maid. Without a glance at us, the girl flitted airily down the long board platform to the steps of the finest Pullman on the train. I noted the porter's obsequious bow, as he made to help her up the car-steps.

"It never touched her! She'll never know!" my curio collector exulted silently, as I followed the Yellow Man and the others into the day-coach, where we belonged.

THE COLLECTOR OF CINDERELLAS

By Mary Dickerson Donahey

A CINDERELLA she was, but a modern elderly Cinderella without either charm or beauty, and it is quite certain she never owned a slipper, except, maybe, of the knitted bedroom variety. One could imagine her flat feet in nothing but the ungainliest of shoes.

Yet, when the golden coach arrived, she rolled away in it to take her place in a romance more amazing than any a mere fairy person ever dreamed of, though happily she never knew that part of it herself.

She saw only her own little sunny place in the strange tale, and settled there, content, while I, through knowing her, stumbled full into the heart of the tragic thing and found—but there the facts just as I learned them will tell the story best.

The first time I ever saw the prince of the story he was leaning over the desk of Mirabel Jones, in the law offices of Bell, Chalfant and Harks, and I stared and wondered at the sight. All the characters in the strange drama are dead—it was over twenty years ago. And yet at this moment I remember keenly the thrill of surprise that crossed me at sight of that man.

Not that he was so unusual in appearance. He wasn't. Had he been, this story would have been long ago exploited in every newspaper in the republic, discussed in clubs and homes and kitchens. An unusual man can't slip about the world unnoticed as this man did.

But I gasped, when I saw him, at the very idea of any man's caring to lean over Miss Jones' desk with that look of devoted admiration on his face, that droop of protecting tenderness to his shoulders.

I had grown up with Mirabel Jones. Never had I seen her command more than the mildest liking from the men about her.

"What does that mean?" I demanded of Harks as he swung open the door of his private office and we passed in.

An odd look swept across his face.

"A love affair," he answered. "Don't laugh—I won't have it. The thing's serious—and beautiful."

"Very well," said I obediently. "But nevertheless the thought of Miss Mirabel with a beau—"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted. "I understand. We laughed, too, at first. But we can't now. Laughing seems like desecration. Think, man, through her whole life that woman has never been attractive, pretty, clever, jolly, capable. Everything's been denied her that makes life livable for most women. We were all at school together. Do you remember that she had much fun those days? Did you ever hear that yarn her mother told at the sewing circle about Mirabel's crying all night because the boys didn't notice her enough to even snowball her as they did the other girls? Ye gods, I never forgot that story. It's kept her her job here even more than the urgent need I know she has for money. She's slow and dull and so pious it sets us on edge just to know she's around, praying for us all every minute in that narrow, kindly little soul of hers. And yet it's not the joy of getting rid of her that makes us tender of this love affair. It's —well, look out there and see for yourself."

I looked, and understood. The man was helping Mirabel into her shabby jacket, but he touched it as though it was a wrap of priceless sable and the look upon her poor plain face as she smiled and thanked him made me turn guiltily away.

I felt that I had stolen a glimpse into another's paradise. That was her last week at the office. It was a short courtship, a shorter engagement, but the Prince, John Haines by name, had told her simply that they were neither of them young, or of any social importance, and that it would be silly for her to work and wait when he wanted her. Wedding things? Why couldn't he help her there? And help her he did, so that poor Mirabel had more dainty things than ever in her whole starved life before, and a simple but pretty wedding that filled her heart with joy.

That part made Harks and me more interested than ever. How many men as generous, as willing would have thought of giving that last touch of happiness, or, thinking, been able to persuade a woman with the pride we knew poor Mirabel possessed to accept it?

"I want to know that man," said Harks admiringly. "Let's go and call on them."

And so one night we went.

If we had glimpsed pure happiness before her marriage, we stepped into it, head over heels, when we went inside her house.

It was a pretty house, by far the best that Mirabel had ever lived in. She herself had chosen it and furnished it, she told us, the Prince—or Mr. Haines, as she shyly called him—insisting that everything should be to her liking.

"Why not?" he said with the gentle dignity that sat so well upon him. "It is her house. It should be as she wishes."

It was a home any woman might have envied, for Mirabel had good taste and her husband had done his share nobly. The bills he paid must have been big ones.

There was a gleam of silver and cut-glass from the dining room, good pictures and rugs, luxurious chairs, a trim maid brought us delicious coffee, and when Mirabel's mother appeared she was gowned in silk and wore gold-rimmed spectacles and an air of patronage that amused and yet delighted us. Poor woman, she had been forced so long to accept thankfully the harder side of life. The only wonder is that the change did not affect Mirabel that way, too. Perhaps her happiness was so intense it left no room for pride.

It was her mother who said the house had been deeded to Mirabel, and that Mr. Haines had also given her a generous supply of bonds, but Mirabel assented and explained: "He said I must be quite independent and able to turn him out if ever I didn't want him. Just as if—" and as she turned to him her voice trailed away into such a look of adoration that again I turned guiltily from her.

Her great love made them both seem almost holy.

Yet there was a cloud even in their sky. Mr. Haines had to be away from home a great deal. He was a collector of antiques and must travel to obtain his wares.

"It is hard, of course, but—I can write to him," Mirabel said softly. And a great wonder came upon me as to what the love-letters must be, written from a heart so long neglected, but now at last blossomed into such perfect flower.

"It does a fellow good to see a thing like that," said Harks as we drove home together, and I agreed most fully.

During the next few months we heard of her quite often, saw her sometimes; now and then her husband. Always it was the same story of peace and happiness and love.

Then business called me to the south and one day I walked out of my hotel and came face to face with Mr. Haines.

He greeted me with evident pleasure, lunched with me, spoke of Mirabel, their home, my work. I was not surprised to see him. The south was a

rich field for collectors back in the early eighties.

It was only when he asked me how long I expected to stay and I said I might be detained for weeks that he showed what I thought to be a trace of annoyance.

But I laughed at myself for the notion. Why should this kindly, courteous gentleman feel any annoyance at how long I chose to stay?

He evidently liked me. I saw him often. I most assuredly liked him—liked him and admired him too. And the more I admired him the more I wondered.

How had this man, with his keen wit, his humor, his knowledge of books and men and places, lost his heart to Mirabel, poor elderly Mirabel, semi-educated, narrow-minded, plain and prim and awkward? Could even such adoration as hers make up for lack of both mental and physical attraction?

Poor child, her very soul was cramped and withered, while his seemed almost Christ-like in its strength and purity.

I had known strange matches, but never one like this. It became almost a mania with me, the wondering, hunting to find a reason for it which continually went on in my mind.

Most unexpectedly the solution came. The first glimpse left me stunned and suffering.

I had grown to admire the man so deeply that it was like tearing out my own ideals to discover in him anything low or base.

And yet—what could I think!

It happened during the last week of my stay. Often during my walks about the pleasant city I had passed a dwarf, a queer, misshapen mite of womanhood, humped before and behind, hobbling painfully, but with a pair of beautiful, blissful deep brown eyes that drew one to her instinctively.

This day, when I met her I was with a garrulous old chap who hung about the hotel most of the time and whose only paths of conversation lay along the traditions, the gossip, of his native town. Now, as he bowed to the little woman I asked idly, "Who is she?"

"Miss Mattie Christopher," he answered. "Or—she was. By George, sir, I don't believe we'll ever get over calling her Miss Mattie, if she lives to celebrate her diamond wedding. For she's married. What do you think of that?"

"I think she must be a woman of a fine, rare nature," I said guardedly, "and that sort of thing goes far towards making us forget the mere twist to a body."

"Yes," he agreed; "but it was the talk of the town when it happened, three—or was it four?—years ago. The talk and the wonder. Not that we didn't like Miss Mattie. Lord, no! But still, that any man should fall in love with a woman like that, with no health, no beauty, no money, even no family—well, sir, we were startled at first. Startled and delighted, for it meant a lot to her. She's not more than thirty-six to-day and yet she would have gone to an old ladies' home if it hadn't happened. Couldn't earn her own living—no relatives and too much pride to live on friends. Most pathetic case. And then along comes this gentlemanly chap and marries her—sets her up in as fine a house as anybody'd want, gives it to her, with more property besides, and makes her the happiest woman in town instead of—well, I won't say the most miserable. Miss Mattie wouldn't let herself be that. But now—happy doesn't express it. It makes a fellow believe in heaven here and hereafter, too, just to see that poor little thing live and look at him. There's only one fly in her honey. Husband has to be away a lot. But he's let her adopt a couple of orphans, as of course they won't have children, and she fusses over them and adores them next to him and is living a real woman's real life—little Mattie Christopher, who seemed shut out from that sort of thing forever. It's a wonder, I tell you, and the man's not the least part of it. See, I've walked you by the house on purpose—

there are the orphans, and, by George, the man's there too. Look over."

I did not want to look. I felt that if I did I should see something horrible. For all the old man's talk of happiness, I felt I should not see that, but a cloud of sorrow, maybe sin, above that pretty home.

But a force seemed drawing my unwilling eyes. Slowly I turned and looked.

Looked Mr. Haines, my Mr. Haines, Miss Mattie's husband, Mirabel's fairy prince, full in the face!

My whole brain was paralyzed for a moment. Then I felt my old friend tugging at my elbow and heard him mutter, "Don't stare so, man—by George, sir, it's not gentlemanly. Come away." I saw Haines nod gently to me and smile.

Somehow that smile strengthened me. I felt that behind it lay not guilt but explanation. What explanation I could not see, but I went back to my hotel room, certain he would come to me.

I was not mistaken. There was a light knock, and then the door opened and Haines came in. No words were needed. He carried himself with the quiet dignity and strength which all who knew him respected and liked so deeply. He sat by the table opposite to me and, leaning forward, said calmly: "Now you know. I was hoping you would leave town before you found me out. But as that has not happened I will explain. I have always meant to explain if it was necessary; but, strange to say, it never has been before. And the thing has been going on twelve years now. Twelve years, and I have married five women."

Five women! And he said this monstrous thing as simply as he might have said, "I have had five children."

I could not have spoken had I wished, but I did not need to try.

"For all this," he went on, "I know some reason must be given. I have the best of reasons. I killed my real wife."

The idea flashed across my mind that I was dealing with a madman. My face showed it, or he himself knew what might be the impression made by such a speech, for he shook his head with his strange, sad little smile.

"No," he said, "I'm not crazy, though if this story ever does become known, I'm quite certain I'll be sent to an insane asylum instead of a prison. No. Let me tell you everything. There is my real wife. I want her before me while I tell the story. She understands."

He put upon the table a red leather case, and as he opened it there lay before me the most lovely face that I have ever seen, pictured or in life.

It was a miniature, painted exquisitely. The soft, dark eyes held a deep splendor, the cloudy hair a faint touch of gold. The tints of the matchless complexion, the tender white of the round, sweet throat seemed almost living.

He nodded at the sharp catch of my breath.

"I know," he said, "she affected everyone that way who saw her. And her mind was as brilliant, her soul as lovely, as her face. It nearly crazed me with happiness when I won her. And winning, I was fearful I might lose. I—I was crazy then. All jealous people are. Love should mean perfect trust. We learn such things too late."

He stooped and laid his lips against the picture.

"Ah, well," he sighed, "she forgave me. She always did. I had so coveted her I felt all men must do the same—that they were all my enemies. I—but who can tell, who explain, the thoughts of a jealous man? Mad thoughts, I say. And mad thoughts beget mad deeds, as we know. From distrusting every man we knew I grew to distrusting her. And it killed her. Oh, I didn't shoot or strangle her. Not that. But my method was as deadly and, I think, more horrible for her. She was ill and an old friend, a man who had a perfect right to visit her, came and I found him talking with her, and there was a scene before her. I even dragged her in."

His face grew haggard. I felt that

every word meant pain to him, but he went on. "I accused her. I would not listen to what she tried to say. I flung away and left her. She grew steadily worse. She had not been very ill at first, but when I returned, sane, humble, penitent, it was too late. She was wildly delirious. She knew me—ah, yes, for my greater punishment she knew me—and all night she pled with me, telling me of her innocence and love over and over again. But she couldn't understand what I said to her. Over and over all night, all the next day, I had to listen to her, for we couldn't stop her at all—and so it was she died."

His head sank upon his breast. There was a long silence. Then he reached out and touched that lovely smiling face again, and went steadily on.

"It was through her I learned my expiation for my sin. I think she told me of it. I have never ceased to talk with her and I feel her answers in my soul. Often we had spoken of the tragedy of lonely women. The women ill and poor and forgotten, or those who have gone a step or two astray and who find the way back so very, very hard. From her own purity and beauty she pitied them, loved them, helped them always. My expiation was to be that, as I had made her unhappy, as I had killed her, so I was to make happy as many of these lonely ones as I could reach. I am well to do—I presume that you would call me rich. I am also a collector and I sell my wares. That part is very true. It helps me in my real work, and I can use much money. All I have, all I can make, and more. Wherever I am, I try to hunt out the lonely, starving women. The women starving for love, for rest and beauty, most of all for a home, and the things a home should bring. Generally mere money is enough. But there have been others who needed more, when there was no one to give but me. There are women, unwanted women, whose greatest tragedy lies not in poverty or work or sickness, but in the mere fact that they are not wanted. Wife souls, mother souls, born for home-making and the care of other people, who throughout their lives go on longing for that which never comes, and which should come to every woman some time —love.

"It is such women whom I have married. Never secretly. Never in any way by stealth. And my whole desire lies in giving to each that which she needs the most.

"You have seen two. Another is dead. When I found her she was working in a mill, and had consumption, but she had to go on and on, for there was a little sister to be helped and shielded. She had had money, but had learned only useless things, so that when need came there was little work that she could find to do. She, too, was one of the unwanted ones. She told me that never had she had a lover, and it was odd, for she was not plain, and she was very lovable. She was the first and she was happy eight years, and the little sister grew up strong and lovely and was married before the other died and she is happy, too."

"How long—after the first—before you married again?" I asked.

"Three years. It was her contentment that helped me to go on. I think you would laugh at the second. She is short and very fat and her eyes cross badly. She was born in a country poorhouse and never knew who her people were, or if she had a name. She supported herself before she was twelve. But she always longed for culture and a name and a position, and she thinks I have given them all to her and she is very happy. She lives in the little town where she was brought up and where she was the laughing stock for years. But they dare not laugh any more, for she is a social leader and the oracle of culture, and helps all the girls in town. She has learned a great deal, but she is still funny sometimes and yet I cannot laugh. She has endured so much so nobly and she has worked so hard."

"There is yet one more," I said.

He sighed. "One more—the saddest of them all. I found her on a wharf

one night. She was going to kill herself. She was not old or plain but young and pretty and rather weak. So weak that when temptation came she could not resist it, and the man—had left her."

For the first time I saw a gleam of rage in his eyes. But he went on, "I got her to tell me everything that night. She was quite wild with shame and suffering. I took her away and married her next day, and the baby bears my name. My only child."

There was a touch of bitter humor in his voice.

"And like the others she is very happy," I added for him.

But to my astonishment he shook his head.

"No—she is the only one who's not. She was. But you see she is still young and pretty and I am old and plain and quiet. Then she knows the difference. She has had love, of its kind, passionate young love, and that I cannot, would not, give. But she longs for it. The others are satisfied with what I have to offer, but she is not and so she is my only failure."

"Failure?" I cried. "She ought to love you best. You've given her most, saved her from most. Good Heavens, doesn't she know a Sir Galahad when she meets him?"

He laughed, a really merry peal.

"Truly," he said, "your comparisons are strange ones. Sir Galahad was not a bigamist and no matter how pure my ideals, how good my aims, why that is what I am."

He smiled again at my horror-stricken face. I had forgotten!

"What," I cried, "of all this happiness you have built if they should ever learn the truth?"

His face grew drawn and sorrowful. "It is my greatest fear. A fear that in spite of all I have saved them from, of all that I have given, they might curse me if they knew. But I can't stop. I do the best I can from day to day, from hour to hour, to give happiness wherever, whenever I can! God must be the judge. And if he lets me outlive these that I have chosen so that I may shield and help them to the end, I will know that in his sight I have done well, and have been forgiven—everything."

He took the miniature and put it back against his heart. And then, as easily as from a discussion of the weather, he said good-bye and left me.

THE UNGENTLE READER

By Richard R. Newbold

I have reader's cramp.

I want no more of hair like burnished copper, of roses (or any mention thereof), or of people who say "hark" when they want someone to listen. I am surfeited with cave men, with persons who are "tubbed" (why not tabled, too?), and with essays in the mouths of characters. Why does the party who is found dead always lie in a "shapeless heap"? And, I say, this English stuff in American conversation, really, you know——

I never saw a valet. And I don't give a darn if I never see one.

EATER OF SOULS

By Dorothea Thompson

HE was quite dead. There was no longer any doubt about that. The men from the Gas Company had put the pulmotor back into the car and were preparing to leave. The neighbors of Teofil Stan fell back from his body to let them through. Their hard, knotty fists were jammed deep in their pockets. They opined gruffly that no matter how drunk a man might be he should have sense enough not to climb a telegraph pole, or that having climbed it he should have taken the precaution not to touch the wires. Shapeless women with children clutching their aprons waddled together into groups. Everywhere there was the self-righteous air of subdued triumph of the survivor. They had liked and respected Teofil Stan alive, but now the shapeless women talked in low voices about a judgment on him for bringing up his fiddling daughter to think that she was too beautiful for the common lot of women on Milwaukee Avenue. Numbers of the women were only twenty, like Rozika, but they had already surrendered their slimness to a succession of dirty children. They could not forgive Rozika the slenderness of her waist. They said with grim enjoyment that Rozika would marry now, or work or starve.

All that night and the next day and the next night they heard the voice of Rozika's violin, rising, falling, calling, wailing. Her mother could not make her put the violin down. The neighbors walked slowly back and forth before the frame store, where from the second floor window came the uncanny crying of the violin, and they said with nervous unease that Teofil Stan's girl had gone stark mad from his sudden death. But Rozika Stan was playing farewell to her foster-father and her violin before she took up her courage and went to work.

Rozika's employer did not think her beautiful. Rather, the first time he noticed her, he thought how amusingly she looked like his wife's pomeranian. Her sulky, beautiful mouth was large and it drooped; her slate-colored eyes were set far apart and slanted upward. She had fine, thin brows that went up from her nose in a Mephistophelian sweep, and lashes, lashes, lashes. Richard Talbot was a commonplace man, vain on a number of scores. Mystery was awing and repellant to him; he was intolerant of it, even while it held him fascinated. Faced with a mystery, he was half-conscious of conflicting sensations; a desire to be further intrigued by his enigma, an anxiety to discover its cause, a determination to reduce it to something explicable in common sense, or failing that, to eradicate it ruthlessly.

He found himself increasingly disturbed by the strange face of Rozika Stan. Whether she were really a mystery, or whether he read into her fascination for him a mystery, was beyond his power to analyze. Only, more and more he found occasion to walk through the outer office where she was employed. Rozika looked up at him when he passed with an indifference so marked as to seem insolence; she dropped her eyes back to her eternal copying before he had thought of taking his eyes from hers.

Talbot felt a lunatic desire to take her by the throat and shake her into showing emotion. Because of her elusiveness and her lack of interest in him,

he came to think of her night and day. He had begun to realize her beauty, but to him she seemed like some beautiful gargoyle.

The time came when his obsession demanded exorcism. He decided to move her into his office, to study her closely, to catch her in some flagrant vulgarity, watch her for stolid stupidity. Her closeness raised his obsession to the point of mania and left her riddle unsolved. She was taciturn; whether her silence covered deeps or shallows he was no nearer discovering than before. Yet what questions he asked her she answered fully. Her dead, indifferent voice completed the havoc that her face had begun.

His knowledge of women taught him that she had some deep resource that satisfied her. The idea pleased him; whatever his own limitations, he was exacting in his taste for women. Insipidity had no attraction for him. He preferred a woman with a dominating interest in life. The game was keener, and it gave him a measure, later, of his own power over her.

"What nationality is your name?" he asked Rozika, after several days of silence. He had been watching her drooping mouth and her contradictory, slanting eyes.

"Stan?" said Rozika, unemotionally. "Polish."

"Is Rozika Polish, too?" he asked. She lifted her shoulders.

"Hungarian, perhaps," she answered.

"Is your mother Hungarian?" Talbot asked.

"No," said Rozika.

"But you said your father was Polish," he said, to confound her. It was characteristic of her that she volunteered no information, though she saw that he was genuinely interested.

"I did not," she said, flatly.

Talbot, used to her unadorned speech, nevertheless turned to look at her more fully.

"My dear girl," he began, "just this minute you told me—"

"That Stan was a Polish name. It is," said Rozika. "But my father was a Hungarian student. He never married my mother. My foster-father knew my mother before my father deserted her. She was so beautiful that he wanted her anyway. He married her before I was born."

She stopped speaking with the effect of brusqueness that she invariably gave. Talbot felt for a moment that in discovering her background of lawless loves he had discovered all her mystery. There was disappointment and satisfaction both in his mind.

"Is your mother still beautiful?" he asked idly. Already his interest was on the wane. He expected a commonplace lie, a dressing-up of the story.

"My mother is thirty-eight and fat," said Rozika. "How should she still be beautiful?"

So at best he had only half-solved his puzzle.

* * *

There came a day when her elusiveness, her self-sufficiency, was explained. It was a hot day, and Rozika came to the office in a blouse that was cut low. On the smooth ivory of her throat, high under the jaw on the left side, there was a small mark of red.

"You play the violin!" said Talbot. His elation over his own success lifted his voice and gave it an effect of enthusiasm. Rozika turned to him, and for the first time he saw responsiveness on her face.

"Do you love music?" she asked.

"I like music," said Talbot. "I don't know much about it. My wife takes care of that for the family. She had a wonderful voice. She gave up a promising career to marry me." It had almost become a formula with him, to tell that when he spoke of music. Rozika looked at him scornfully.

"She was a fine fool!" she said, and turned to her work.

Her cool disgust lashed him into frenzy. For the first time the well-worn boast sounded fatuous in his own ears. No glimmering of the compensation that his love might have paid his wife showed on Rozika's face. Tal-

bot's wife had given up something dearer to Rozika then than the love of any man, and Rozika despised them both for it. Mixed with Talbot's own growing desire for the girl was the new fury of his goaded vanity. He would have been happier if there had been less of the first to confuse the latter.

He made love to Rozika, and Rozika laughed at him. It was as if she held up her violin to ward him off. He remembered his wife when he first knew her; he had felt that her voice was an almost tangible barrier, a defense against him, a shield from any great grief.

But Rozika was more moved than he guessed. Her lids seemed to grow heavy as she looked at him, and when she felt that, she dropped them and mocked him.

He touched her finally through his interest, only half-assumed, in her violin-playing. He felt drunk with foreseen success when she asked him to come hear her play. He foresaw his conquest of her and of himself. He felt he had only to see her in her awful home to be rid forever of her witchcraft.

But he had reckoned without Rozika's violin.

The second-floor home was indeed awful. And the mother — fat and thirty-eight — his wife's age, alone would have brought any man to his sober senses. Rozika came in at her mother's call. She was dressed in her working clothes, and to Talbot's clarified vision she seemed dull and awkward. Finally, when the intolerable conversation came to a pause, he mentioned the violin with new, relieved condescension. Rozika went out of the room silently and returned carrying a case. Something of the old abstracted look that had piqued him when he first saw her had come back into her eyes. Rozika lifted the violin, she tuned it delicately, she slipped it beneath her chin as though the beautiful wood had been warm and throbbing. Rozika played.

Sitting there in the stuffy second-floor room, Talbot listened as one lost. Rozika flaunted, Rozika cajoled, Rozika crooned and laughed and mocked. She told him things about herself that brought the hot blood to his face; the minute after she taunted him with having misconstrued her. She teased him and made love to him; she was abandoned and shameless; she was desolate and abject. And when he looked at her face, it was as if Rozika had put on a mask.

Up, up, up went the violin, and when it seemed as if Talbot must shriek with the tension, Rozika ended with a crash. She held the violin and bow limply by her sides and her head drooped. She was as white as death, and her mother was sobbing convulsively.

Talbot never knew how he left, what he said. He rode around for hours, afraid to think. He seemed to have gone mad with the revelations of Rozika's violin. Her old spell was back upon him, hotter, wilder than before. When he reached home he walked out on the bluffs, listening to the crashing lake. There remained to him one form of exorcism that had never before failed him. He told his wife of Rozika and her violin.

"We must have her here to play," said Mrs. Talbot. She was either a thoroughbred, or she had long ago ceased to feel.

Fortified with his wife's knowledge, Talbot went toward his next meeting with Rozika with comparative calm. She was silent, as ever; but she was white and trembling as well. She met Talbot's eyes squarely, and her look made him shake. So must her mother have looked when she was young and beautiful, into the eyes of the Hungarian student. Talbot began to know surely that he had fathomed her mystery, that in reaching her through her violin he had made himself master of her.

And his vanity, which for a short time had lain numb and ineffective, raised its head and rejoiced at the conquest of Rozika. He had an instinct

for delicate torture, and he told her of his wife's invitation.

Talbot thought for a moment that she would refuse. She took the invitation without looking at him. She looked long at her hands. Then she laughed and said:

"Yes, I will come. I will come and show your fine wife what she gave up for you." She looked up derisively into his eyes and saw that she had flicked him on the raw. He had been so sure of her.

But Rozika was half-mad with jealousy. She had her own strange standards; she pictured Richard Talbot's wife as loving him with torment and rapture, as she would have to love the man for whom she put down her violin. If that were so she would leave her Richard, but she would go show her what the gift was that she had given up; if she had ever really known music, Talbot's wife should envy Rozika, even as Rozika envied her.

* * *

It was a hot, still night. The lake lay under the cliff like oil. Mrs. Talbot, looking into Rozika Stan's contemptuous face, felt that all outdoors would be too small for Rozika and her violin. There were other guests, but Rozika had eyes only for the negative, beautiful face of Audrey Talbot. She watched her with furious scorn and vicious jealousy. This cool, white woman owned Richard Talbot; it was to this woman that he would return when she took her spell from him. Rozika followed her through the hot silver night, over the smooth grass, answering her civility with silence, made awkward by her anger.

Mrs. Talbot led her to a tiny Grecian stage. It had an unearthly beauty in the moonlight; Rozika left satisfaction at realizing that her drama was to be fittingly produced. She caught a glimpse of Richard Talbot, standing uneasily against a tree. Under the kind, obliterating moon he looked young again, a faun in evening clothes.

Rozika looked down on the still, cold face of Audrey Talbot and out to the tortured face of the man she owned. She lifted her violin and played.

The dull, conventional guests were nothing. Rozika was playing to an audience of two, lashing one with her contempt and defiance, calling the other with every art known to her violin. She was laughing brutally at Audrey Talbot, calling her a fool to think that she could hold Richard against her, telling her viciously that her reign was over. To Richard she told her scorn of his cold, white wife; She promised him sensations that he had never known, vowing to make his disloyalty worth its price. She worked herself into a frenzy; it seemed to her at last that she was playing her swan-song across her own nerves. Her violin laughed and sobbed like a demon. There came a high, wild call; the audience struggled to its feet, uncertain whether Rozika or the violin had given that last shriek. Rozika stood in the middle of the stage like a frenzied priestess, holding her violin and bow in her upstretched hands. Suddenly she caught them both back against her breast and ran sobbing off the stage, back through its screen of bushes, and vanished from their sight.

"Go after her, Dick. She's overwrought," said Audrey Talbot. She was as white and unmoved as ever.

Richard Talbot found Rozika on the cliff. She was leaning motionless against a pine, her strange, beautiful face turned up to the moon. When Dick was quite near she spoke.

"You are mine!" she said. Her voice was no longer the dull, indifferent voice Dick knew so well; it was hot and throbbing like his hands—like his throat. "That cold, white wife of yours! I hate her! What does she want of you? She's too frozen to love! She's too cold to suffer." In a moment she seemed to go wild with jealousy. She hurled herself on him, the violin against her breast. She spoke chokingly, not always in English. "You're mine, mine! Dick . . . I hate her! Dick, will you come with me? She doesn't know how to love you." She

beat his shoulder with her clenched fist. "I love you . . . I love you. If you laugh at me I will kill you."

And Talbot, with his instinct for delicate torture, said:

"And yet, she did for me what you would never do. She gave—"

With a sharp cry, Rozika pushed him away. She looked like a young witch in the moonlight. Still holding him with her eyes, she raised her violin above her head and brought it down with all her strength against the pine tree. It shivered and splintered into a thousand pieces. She broke her bow across her knee and threw the two pieces down the cliff. She held out her empty hands to him, put them against his lips for a gift.

Then, turning in his arms, she faced Audrey Talbot.

Still clinging to Dick, Rozika shrieked and raged at her like a young Fury. She taunted her with coldness, she cried her own right in him. She fell silent at last, worn out by her own vehemence. Audrey Talbot stood still and white till Rozika's voice dropped.

"Listen to me," she said. She paused for a moment; then she gave a little laugh. "Oh, take him," she said. "He's nothing but torment to me. If I had anything left of what good people call charity or human kindness, I would keep him away from you. . . . You're very young, and you have your violin. And yet you want the love of a worn-out man."

She looked at them both, still smiling. "You think he loves you," she said. "Do you know what he will do to you? He has done it before. To me, and before that. . . . He will find your soul and take it away from you. I tell you now, and when it happens you will remember. He was married before I knew him. She had a baby, and that baby was her soul. *He* knew it; he knew that while she had it she would never be his, heart and soul—his creature. So he persuaded her to send the baby away, that it wasn't strong enough to live in the city. And she sent her baby to the country, and without her it sickened and died. But she was wiser than I. She killed herself."

Audrey Talbot paused a moment. "Then he met me. Till I knew him, I lived for my voice. He's told you of it; he always boasts of this. I worshipped my voice; I struggled and fought for it. Then he came and hated it; it was his rival, you see. I loved him. I loved him so that if I could have torn my voice out of my throat and given it to him in my two hands I would have done it. I gave it up for him. Do you know what happened then? I died. He had loved me because I baffled him; I eluded him, and it drove him wild. He caught me and tore out my soul, and you see what remains. Just a shell of a woman, not enough to hold him against you.

"It's your turn now. I wasn't the last, and you won't be. I don't care what happens to you. But I hate him. I want him beaten. So I tell you now, you can hold him if you wish. He will worship and follow you, he will beg and pray and grovel. He will drive you mad with love of him. And when he does he will try to get your soul. But he's yours now, and he'll stay yours"—Audrey came nearer Rozika, she spoke like a woman in a dream—"until for him you break your violin!"

Rozika sprang back from her like a mad woman. Her hands went searchingly about her dress; some wild atavistic impulse had set her searching for a weapon. For a moment she stopped, baffled. Then she sprang at Richard bare-handed, and the fury in her face was so awful that he fell back in fright. He clutched for the pine tree, missed it, and went hurtling over the side of the cliff.

Richard Talbot's two women stood quiet in the moonlight. Said Audrey, in a still, dead voice:

"He may be alive. I'll get help." She set off across the grass in a listless, indifferent run.

When she came back the cliff was bare. Under the pine tree in the moonlight lay the splintered pieces of a violin.

THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF LOVE

By Evelyn Evans Madden

My dear Miss Brown:—

.....

Yours truly,
LIVINGSTON JONES.

Dear Miss Brown:—

.....

Yours sincerely,
LIVINGSTON JONES.

My dear Miss Margaret:—

.....

Yours very sincerely,
LIVINGSTON JONES.

My dear Margaret:—

.....

Yours cordially,
JONSEY.

Dearest Margaret:—

.....

Faithfully,
LIVINGSTON.

Meg darling:—

.....

Devotedly,
LIV.

Sweetheart:—

.....

Until death,
L. C.

Meg darling:—

.....

Devotedly,
LIV.

Dearest Margaret:—

.....

Faithfully,

LIVINGSTON.

My dear Margaret:—

.....

Yours cordially,

JONSEY.

My dear Miss Margaret:—

.....

Yours very sincerely,

LIVINGSTON JONES.

Dear Miss Brown:—

.....

Yours sincerely,

LIVINGSTON JONES.

My dear Miss Brown:—

.....

Yours truly,

LIVINGSTON JONES.

RAIN AT NIGHT

By Neeta Marquis

IT first came like a dreamer's sigh,
So soft I could not call it sound,—
A stir—a breath—as if the sky
Drew close to kiss the quiet ground.

And then the tinkling drip began,
Like beads slipped from a silver chain.
Arpeggios of raindrops ran
On leaf and walk and window-pane.

Sleep sought me as I listening lay,
And bore me off on velvet wings.
And oh, when I awoke at day,
The fragrance of the garden-things!

HUMORESQUE

By John Hanlon

IT was just that hour when the sky is flooded with greenish mists, when discordant noises are hushed, and the entire world is indistinct, hazy—and beautiful.

I sat in the marble pergola, my hands folded, thinking . . . of nothing. The full-bloom roses showered around me in fragrant eddies. No regret for the past, no doubt for the future troubled my soul. . . . I could have remained so for ever.

Then he came, rushing like the eager wind as it caresses the ivy leaves. The bushes bent low before him. The blossoms were crushed under his feet.

He pressed me to him. His kisses burnt upon my lips, my forehead, my neck. They mingled with the falling, scarlet petals and seemed to be softer and sweeter . . . I almost swooned through ecstasy.

He whispered to me and his words were more enchanting than music. My ears could scarcely understand, so strange, so wonderful were his accents. My heart was too overwhelmed to answer.

Then, I fled from his arms. I could not endure such great happiness. Life was fraught with a new meaning. I was afraid to look back lest it prove to have been all a dream.

I staggered into the drawing-room. On the table lay a tiny book. The cover bore his name, I pressed my quivering lips against it. Anything that was his I could worship.

I opened it, my eyes glowing with eagerness . . . O God! If I had only been blind; if I had only been illiterate and unable to read!

There, there in the crude barbarity of black and white printing were bared to the vulgar gaze, the secrets of a soul. He had stripped love naked and exposed it to the multitude. He had dissected, profaned it.

Even the things that he had whispered to me were made common. He had said them before; he would say them many times over.

Love for him was an episode to be enjoyed and studied for a while, and then to be sold for a few paltry pennies. He was a thief who stole the most precious treasures of a woman's heart.

The world turned black before me. I had thought everything so rose-colored, only to find it . . . sordid and ugly. A tear scalded my cheek. My lips burned with the shameful memory of his kisses. I would be done with him for ever. I would never see him again . . .

His voice sounded on the terrace outside. He was calling to me. A sob tore my bosom. I crept to the door to bar it against him. I could not do it. Something was drawing me towards him. I flung myself into his arms, and lifted my face towards his. The dying rose petals fell around us in a crimson rain.

FORCE OF HABIT

By Roland Young

SIR GEORGE rose and killed the butler. The thing was done so quietly and smoothly that his fellow guests never even guessed that anything untoward had happened. Death was instantaneous and Sir George immediately reseated himself and washed the blood from his hands in his finger bowl. Without evincing the slightest emotion, he quietly but expeditiously worked the fast stiffening corpse under the table with his immaculately shod left foot, carrying on, meanwhile, a flow of delicate badinage with the Duchess, who was his partner for the meal.

The dinner party was one of those interminable affairs so dear to those on whom fortune has bestowed rank, wealth and a good digestion. When, several hours later, the men rose from their port and went up to join the ladies, Sir George contrived to stay behind. He approached his host and with that consummate tact and diplomacy for which he was so justly famed, managed, for a moment, to isolate him.

"Forgive me, Your Grace," he said, "but I would be excused from joining the ladies for a while. The heat of the room—the wine and the—er—the lobster. Tinned, I think?" (His Grace nodded apologetically.) "Quite so—well, these things have combined to make me somewhat uncomfortable—internally."

The Duke bowed. "Pray make yourself at home, Sir George. Ring twice if you wish for anything, the servants will understand." Sir George bowed and the Duke left him.

Finding himself alone, Sir George quickly whipped off the table cloth regardless of the glass and cutlery, and overturning the table, knelt by the cold body of the late butler and dexterously searched his pockets. He soon found what he was looking for. He rose and in his hand he grasped a small twisted scrap of coronetted note paper. As he read the words thereon, his face grew tense and slightly mauve. "My word," he muttered, "my word." It was the nearest approach to an oath that had ever sullied his smoothly shaven lips. After a moment or two he became acutely conscious of the corpse at his feet on which the heat of the room was already beginning to take effect. The butler, who had been of an unprepossessing appearance in life, was positively repulsive in death, and Sir George, after gazing wildly round him, rang the bell three times. The servants understood.

It is now time to satisfy the reader's legitimate curiosity. Sir George was delicately in love with Lady Eileen. It was one of those pale green emotions (passion were too strong a word) that seem to be a monopoly of men of Sir George's somewhat effete type. He had reason to believe that Lady Eileen entertained a similar, though of course even more delicate, feeling for him. Things had been in this condition for some twenty years, neither of them being impulsive by nature, but up to this night Lady Eileen had never given him cause for jealousy.

During the early part of the dinner, Sir George had happened to look up just as the butler was slowly but surely pouring the consommé down Lady Eileen's neck. This had not disturbed the lady, because, as I have already ob-

served, the room was hot and the consommé cold. The result, therefore, was a feeling rather pleasant than otherwise. This incident alone would not have surprised Sir George, as it was one of frequent occurrence. The late butler, having been blind since birth, was rather apt to serve the various courses in this somewhat eccentric manner. He had realized that the food was meant for the guests and not merely as an ornament for the table, and he saw to it that they got it somehow. What had caused Sir George so far to forget himself as to kill a butler that did not belong to him was this:

Lady Eileen, after the first shock of the cold soup on her warm neck, had uttered a little fluttering sigh of pleasure, and, extracting something (obviously a note) from her corsage, had turned and dexterously hidden it in the butler's luxuriant and curling whiskers. It so happened that one end of the note worked its way out of the concealing curls and stood out with blinding distinctness against the background of black hair. This small but dazzling note of color, combined with the heat of the room and the inferior quality of the Duke's wine, got on Sir George's nerves and resulted in the sudden frenzy that ended in the unnoticed and unlamented death of the butler.

Pale and somewhat tremulous, Sir George tore himself from the sideboard and left the room. Once outside the door, he pulled himself together with an effort and went upstairs to the drawing room. The murder had been a new and vivid experience for him, and even now he was hardly in a normal condition. As he walked up the broad marble staircase he noticed that the butler's blood had indeed spattered his shirt front, but in such a way that the drops looked like ruby studs. There were just three drops, one below the other, and in the very middle of his shirt. This consideration on the part of the deceased servant touched Sir George. He would even, had it been possible, have gone back and restored the corpse to life. This, however, after a moment's thought he realized was impracticable, and putting the idea from his mind, he entered the drawing room.

The first person he saw was Lady Eileen. She was sitting all alone near the door playing solitaire. Sir George approached and watched the cards over her shoulder. Immediately he noticed something peculiar about them. They were uncolored and instead of the spots being printed they were raised. They were in fact cards designed for the blind. This discovery irritated Sir George and forgetting himself, he came around and kicked Lady Eileen sharply on the ankles for a moment or two. Lady Eileen endured his roughness for a while and then rose calmly and with infinite grace and dignity she pulled Sir George's nose. The sudden, sharp pain of his tweaked nose restored Sir George to his senses. He turned and apologized to Lady Eileen for any temporary inconvenience he might have caused her ankles. Lady Eileen replied with a tender smile but no words. In fact she was dumb. It was this very dumbness that had attracted Sir George to her from the beginning. A few days before their first meeting Lady Eileen had been knocked down and run over by a motor-bus.

The shock of this accident to one who had led so quiet a life as Lady Eileen may easily be imagined and the result was that she had lost her power of speech. Sir George with subtle perception immediately realized that her dumbness would render her an ideal companion. He possessed a quiet sense of humor and would amuse himself for hours making insulting remarks to the lady and chuckling with well-bred delight at her inability to reply. On this occasion, however, Sir George, realizing the seriousness of the situation, refrained from useless words and merely produced the note that he had found on the dead butler and pushed it in her face. It stuck, the room being hot, and she had to pick it off with her small and exquisitely shaped hand. As soon as Lady Eileen saw and recognized the

note, she screamed twice—on her fingers—and fainted.

The Duke, overhearing the incident, immediately drove the other guests into the adjoining room and locked them in. Coming up to where Sir George was stooping over Lady Eileen and smacking her face vigorously in a vain effort to restore her to consciousness, he said, quietly but with dignity—"Please let us have no scene before the servants, if she does not recover soon—" He left the sentence unfinished but his sinister expression left no doubt as to his meaning.

Sir George, not wishing to lose the lady who would some day be his wife, grew almost frantic. Doubling his fists he smote her a violent blow on the ear. It was effective. Lady Eileen's eyebrows fluttered and almost came off. She sighed and opened her eyes.

Sir George put his arm around her and raised her to a sitting position. There was a slight noise and Sir George saw that the note had fallen from her hand. It was a moment for prompt action, if he did not wish the Duke, who was an inveterate gossip, to realize the scandal. With one hand he pushed Lady Eileen off the chair on to the floor so that she covered the note and with the other he knocked the Duke off his feet and through the window. The tinkle of the broken glass upon the Duke's exit aroused Lady Eileen completely. She arose and picking up the note tore it across and across and scattered the tiny fragments on the floor. Sir George gasped. The horrible truth dawned on him that he would never know the contents of the note as it had been written in raised type for the blind and at that was in shorthand, a language of which Sir George was completely ignorant. For a full hour they remained silent, deep in thought. Then Sir George sadly, regretfully, strangled Lady Eileen where she stood and, turning, left the room and the house. It had been an eventful evening and he was tired. Arrived at his rooms he wrote out a notice and pinned it on the door of his bedroom. It was simple and dignified and read—"Don't call me."

So perfectly were his servants trained and so much was he a creature of habit, that it was impossible for him to get up without being called. It was years before they discovered the skeleton.

COWS THAT WEEP

By W. F. Schaphorst

SAD music should be played to cattle just before slaughtering. Some of the cows will weep, and some will not. Those that weep should then be driven into one yard and kept apart from the rest.

In this way steak can truthfully be labeled "tender" or "tough."

Give us cows that weep.

TO THÉA

By Norbert Lusk

WHETHER her name be Ann or Xenia: her eyes the color of aquamarines or like stars of jet: her manner grave or gay: her figure that of a Dresden sheperdess or a daughter of Diana: her disposition that of a saint or a termagant—whether her fortune lie in her soul or in the mines of Kimberley: whether she have a taste for golf or window gardening, for tatting or equal rights—all these trifles I leave to the Fates but with but one reservation: that she be a Goddess of The Tea Urn!

She must decoct the blessed leaf with grace, ease, swiftness and precision and must, moreover, do it properly. She must make of her tea table a little altar and her slave will drink as an act of oblation. It must gleam with fragile china and bits of old silver; it must shine and shimmer through constant usage and care.

In a quaint little canister, as fragrant as a rose jar, she will keep her tea, and will measure and weigh it with the exactitude of a lapidary. She will know when it is that English Breakfast is relished, at what period of the day the buds of Ceylon are most satisfying; when the perfumed Oolong needs the sharpened sense of taste for its appreciation; at what hour the heavy Pekoe gives cheer and stimulation but does not cloy, and, in those moments she makes all her own, she will pour an ambrosial blend or her secret invention.

She will make of her comforting ministrations a ceremonial of dainty epicureanism, yet she will know that when her votary is tired or heavy of heart she must omit the rites and be expeditious.

The vessel in which she brews the liquid will be strange yet beautiful: it will be no mere teapot cast in a common mould, but a vase of surpassing value.

She will make of her tea table not only a temple of tannin but a place for tender intimacies. She will know when to cajole, when to console, when to let the silence speak instead. She will never rattle her utensils, nor forget, nor apologize for anything.

As the molten amber gushes from the beneficent spout her worshipper will see a white wrist poised aloft, kissed by a foamy ruffle, and catch the glint of candlelight on an antique ring.

If it be lemon she gives him it will be wafer discs of the fruit; if it be rum she will sprinkle a few dewy drops from a bottle of crystal. And when she fails to ask the usual question it will be to let fall a domino of sparkling frost into his vapor wreathed cup.

Presenting him with the cup she will add an indescribable smile and will look into his eyes and he into hers. When she finally withdraws her hand and urges him to drink his tea before it becomes quite cold she will find in her palm, sealed, cemented, bound, riveted —my heart!

CÉSAR

By Clément Rochel

AU coin de la grand'rue et de la petite place, il y avait alors une échope où, du matin au soir, toujours chantant, un petit cordonnier battait et tirait le ligneul.

Bien que la natur ne l'eût point précisément comblé de tous ses dons, — car il était un tantinet difforme et bancroche, — il répondait au nom héroïque de César, lequel nom, due reste, il devait justifier un jour, ainsi que nous l'allons montrer.

En attendant, c'était bien le cordonnier le plus joyeux qui existât par tous les pays qu'arrose la Dronne, des monts du Limousin aux flots de l'Océan. La ville entière résonnait de ses chansons, comme de ses coups de marteau, du petit jour au coucher du soleil.

Las! savons-nous jamais ce que nous réserve l'avenir? Pouvons-nous escompter la stabilité de notre existence, quelque assise et aussi peu aventureuse qu'elle nous paraisse?

* * *

Un après-midi, vers trois ou quatre heures, au moment où César était fort occupé à donner un aspect de jumeaux à deux escarpins disparates, dont la parenté semblait fort problématique, il constata que le travail n'excluait pas l'appétit, et, sur-le-champ, se prépara une tartine bien chargée de confitures, qu'il posa délicatement sur son *veilloir, dans* l'intention de la manger, en travaillant, par petites bouchées.

Il faisait une chaude journée. La fenêtre, ou plutôt le châssis de l'échoppe, laissait pénétrer l'air tiède de la rue, où dansaient, à la chanson monotone de leur musique bourdonnante, des essaims de guêpes en rupture de jardin.

César s'était remis à ses escarpins.

Soudain, — quelle audace! — il aperçut sur sa tartine une cinquantaine de guêpes qui, sans distinction aucune, ripaillaient à ses dépens...

Furieux, le cordonnier fit un geste de la main, accompagné d'un "chcht!" énergique destiné à mettre en fuite les pillardes. Mais celles-ci, probablement déjà ivres à moitié de confitures, ne cronchèrent pas d'une aile. On les eût dit collées sur la tartine, ce qui était possible, au demeurant.

Alors, transporté de colère, César se leva, saisit une serviette accrochée au mur, et l'abattit à grande volée...

Cela ne se fit pas sans quelques éclaboussures, bien entendu. Mais après la violence de son acte, le cordonnier compta ses victimes...

Six, huit, dix guêpes, — dix cadavres! — gisaient au milieu des confitures. Les autres avaient pris leur vol.

Soigneusement, le cordonnier nettoya sa tartine, et la mangea, non sans quelque répugance, tout en murmurant à part lui:

— Dix! J'en ai tué dix d'un seul coup!... C'est extraordinaire!...

* * *

L'affaire fit grand bruit en ville.

Car César ne manqua pas de colporter de maison en maison, de boutique en boutique, son épouvantable massacre...

Quelques personnes, des esprits forts, demeurèrent un peu sceptiques; mais beaucoup de gens ajoutèrent foi au récit du cordonnier; et, dès ce jour, le regardèrent avec admiration...

"Dix!... Il en tue dix d'un coup! Quelle poigne vigoureuse!"

Seulement, voilà: César avait bien soin de ne pas dire que s'il en tuait dix, ce n'étaient que des guêpes!

Sa réputation d'homme terrible se répandit de proche en proche, et il fut bientôt célèbre dans toute la province.

Or, vers ce temps, messieurs de la maré chaussée, qui étaient les gendarmes de l'époque, avaient fort à faire avec un certain Brelinlin, brigand insaisissable, qui désolait la contrée; ce n'était, chaque jour, que dépravations, pillages, incendies, attaques à main armée... Les pauvres gendarmes étaient sur les dents, — ce qui les devait bien gêner pour courir...

Et le brigand continuait la série de ses forfaits.

Alors, la prévôté et le baillage tinrent conseil.

— Il n'y a que César pour nous débarrasser de Brelinlin! dirent les autorités. Un homme qui en tue dix aura facilement raison de lui.

On appela le petit cordonnier, qui, moyennant la forte somme, consentit à aller combattre le brigand.

Il partit en campagne et revint le lendemain.

— Eh bien? lui demanda-t-on.

— Dormez tranquille, braves gens! Brelinlin est mort... Je l'ai pulvérisé!

Et le plus merveilleux, c'est que, depuis, on n'entendit plus parler du brigand!

Seulement, ce que César n'avait pas dit, c'est que Brelinlin s'était noyé, par hasard, en franchissant un torrent grossi par des pluies récentes...

* * *

Ce haut fait, que ne pouvaient nier les esprits les plus réfractaires, mit le comble à la renommée de César. On parla de lui à la cour du roi de France, chez le sultan de Foun-Tatahouine, et jusque dans l'entourage du rajah de Migsore, lequel le manda en son palais et lui confia la mission de détruire la licorne qui osait venir faire des siennes jusque dans le temple du dieu Siva...

Le petit cordonnier s'acquitta de cette charge avec d'autant plus de facilité que la licorne était un animal fabuleux qui n'avait jamais existé.

Il revint en France comblé d'honneurs, accablé de richesses, constellé de diamants et de pierreries.

On cite encore mille actions d'éclat, de force et de bravoure, qu'il accomplit en se jouant, sans y prendre garde, et qui mirent le comble à sa gloire. A tel point que, revenu dans son échoppe de la grand'rue, César excita la jalousie du capitaine de la maréchaussée jusqu'à lui faire contracter une jaunisse dont il expira.

Quant au petit cordonnier, il faut bien le dire, il s'éteignit aussi...

Peut-être en combattant le grand Turc ou les soudards de Frédéric-le-Grand?

Non. Pas du tout. César mourut d'une piqûre de guêpe!

THE happiest family life is led by a childless widower.

THE heart of a school-girl is a love-letter unaddressed.

A MERRIER STAGE

By George Jean Nathan

IT is frequently recommended by the more droll among our dramatic reviewers that audiences, in order to enjoy this or that Broadway play, ought, before they enter the theater, check their brains in the coat-room. Say what you will against the idea, you must yet admit its thorough practicability. There would still be lots of room left for the coats.

I allude, of course, to New York audiences, and more particularly to New York first-night audiences: those gaudy and ribald compounds of kept women, Mosaic men-about-town, overdressed, chattering, ogling actors out of jobs, ladies' underwear impresarios and such like metropolitan provosts of the drama. The stratagem of the Messrs. Shubert in suddenly opening Mr. Harold Brighouse's comedy "Hobson's Choice" in the Princess Theater at a matinée, while the fancy girls were still snoozing, the crescent-nosed men-about-town busy matching linings in East Houston street and the out-of-work grimaciers just going to bed, not only accounts for the intelligent audition permitted that play but also, doubtless, for what consequent success it has deservedly achieved. In all my years of New York critical service, I have not seen so respectable and so satisfying an audience as the one in point. Even some of the regular dramatic critics were absent.

Mr. Brighouse's piece is so uniformly engaging a composition that it would not have stood much of a chance with a New York first-night audience. In the first place, it is a play of character acted by expert character actors in place of a play of Russ Whytals in white wigs acted by Russ Whytals in white wigs. In the second place, it is a play in which the heroine, called by the manuscript to wear severely plain frocks throughout the presentation, does not waddle out in a bogus epilogue written by Lucile to regale and bewitch the numskulls. And in the third place, its risqué third act climax might offend the first-night kept ladies.

This climax, with its accompanying saucy line of dialogue (probably the most Rabelaisian spoken into an audience's ear from the American pantaloon platform) is an integral part of a comedy of Lancashire in the early '80's, a comedy of brusque manners and motives told with fluency yet admirable artistic restraint. Its materials in themselves commonplace enough and suffering dramatically from somewhat undue expansion, the play is given the dew of vitality by the humorous and unromantic twinkle of its creator's eye, past which gay orb the ancient materials are made to goose-step. Thus, to the old theme of the ugly duckling who achieves a mate and sets herself to develop him from the dull lout he is into a man of tang and position, there is brought a salt and sparkle that make the dish highly toothful. This Brighouse, verily, has done a good job. And his play is an object lesson to all local yammerers who, when the ancient countenance of their dramatic compositions is criticized, yowl that there are only so many situations after all and that everything depends upon the way the playwright looks at them. The object lesson is this: Brighouse has taken a dilapidated idea and has looked at it through the eyes of Brighouse. Nine

out of ten American showmakers, taking the same moss-eared idea, would have looked at it through the eyes of Madeleine Lucette Ryley. Or, worse still, through their own.

Another frayed idea handled with rare skill is made visible in Mr. Avery Hopwood's farce "Fair and Warmer." Founding his composition upon a theme familiar to the vaudevilles, the theme to wit of the two mismated couples and of the straight-laced husband of couple number one and the straight-laced wife of couple number two getting together, kicking up their heels and astounding their now made jealous respective mates, Mr. Hopwood has exercised a so considerable ingenuity and a so robust sense of humor that his farce makes of the stomach of its every auditor a Sahary Djeli. The thing, in a word, is one long beery bellow, one continuous hooch-cooch of the intestines. The piece belongs to the school of farce designated as "suggestive," which is to say, it deals with subjects that are discussed, when at all, only by married women—and then only in public.

But Hopwood's suggestiveness is gorgeously forthright and indelicate. His not the mincing suggestiveness of the old maid playwright, nor on the other hand, the unhumorous dirt of the hack Broadway whortleberry. His rather the touch of a Sacha Guitry, a Rip and Bousquet, a Max Maurey, a Lothar Schmidt, a Romain Coolus. He indulges in no timid equivoque, in no falsetto synonym. His bedroom is a bedroom, not a boudoir. His intruder into the bedroom takes another and more plausible form than that of the usual stage burglar. One of the indeed unjust criticisms which has been visited upon Mr. Hopwood by the precisians of the daily press concerns itself with complimenting him upon his device of letting the audience know beforehand that everything, despite its naughty air, is perfectly innocent. Mr. Hopwood, in the preparation of his play, assuredly had no such intention of easing any potential auditorium shock. And he should not be made to suffer such silly and groundless praise. He is altogether too much a scholar of the world not to have known, and knowing to have appreciated, the doubled risqué force and greater suggestiveness of a *mot* which precedes the fact over a *mot* which follows the fact. The night before is ever infinitely more suggestive than the morning after. Facts are not naughty, but promises are. To argue that the naughtiness is less naughty because there is nothing back of it, because it is founded on innocence, as in the present instance have some of the local blue-noses, is to argue that "Resurrection" is a more risqué play than "Have You Anything to Declare?" And to argue further that the naughtiness of the dialogue is made less naughty by the Hopwood device of casting the leading figure in the person of a baby-eyed ingénue is to argue that a young cutie reading "Droll Stories" aloud is a less disquieting spectacle than a hag of twenty-two engaged in the same business.

This Hopwood is a farce composer of the first native order. He has a quick eye to the crazy-quilt of sex humors and a keen vision for the foibles of the cosmopolite. If he maintains his French frankness and abjures the puritanical Anglo-Saxon pettinesses that in time seem to assail the writers for the American stage, he is headed for high farce estate. Ere this paper appears in print, his dramatization of his merry SMART SET novelette "A Full Honeymoon" (under the title of "Sadie Love") will have seen the calcium light. If, word for word, this story is transferred to the platform, it will add measurably to its creator's reputation. But a little bird has whispered to me that, in order to lessen the blushes of the Broadway vestals, they are going to edit Sadie Love, virgin, into Sadie Love, widow!

Mr. Hopwood's currently visible farce is very well played by two minstrels in particular: Miss Madge Kennedy and Mr. John Cumberland. The Kennedy, especially, is a piquant clown.

Another excellent farce—albeit promulgated as serious drama—is Mr. Robert McLaughlin's "The Eternal Magdalene," a kind of *gelée* of "The Servant in the House," "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," "Mrs. Warren's Profession" and Primrose and Dockstader's Minstrels. I have already observed in another quarter that the play so unmistakably draggletailed that it calls for no amplification of criticism. To say simply that an egg is bad is sufficient. And assuredly a satisfying enough characterization. It is fruitless to go into the reasons for the egg's badness: to discuss the egg's parentage, childhood, college career and amours. And yet so superior in its badness is the stage work mentioned that, by this very excess of virtuosity, a brief eye to its anatomy may not be without tonic result.

In a story which Mr. Charles Belmont Davis wrote for the November number of this magazine, appeared the following remarks (addressed by a man to a wench who has been hoisting sweet sex slobber in his direction): "Miss Leslie, when I was much younger I saw a good deal of women—good and bad—all kinds. . . . I have known the kind of women who owned their carriages and their sealskin coats and who hung diamond necklaces and such junk around their throats. And I have known the lowest class—poor devils who worked in dance-halls and back-room saloons and such like. But I found that both kinds—all kinds—had generally one trait in common, and it usually broke out in the sordid, early-morning hours when the talk had become personal and maudlin. The lie they told, and pretty much all of them told the same lie, was to excuse their present social position. They claimed they were what they were because . . ."

Mr. McLaughlin's play indicates that Mr. McLaughlin (to employ the argot of the people) has fallen for the girls' early morning sob sonata, the-story-of-my-life nocturne, the Yale-and-Princeton-flags-on-the-wall intermezzo. His play is the play every sophomore, after a week-end visit to New York, plans sometime to write. In brief, a defence of the slipped sister. But Mr. McLaughlin's defence is, strictly speaking, less Mr. McLaughlin's than the slipped sister's own. Which is to say, a sort of boozy crying onto the egg sandwich when the all-night restaurant orchestra invades Ethelbert Nevin. The play is cheaply conceived and cheaply written. It is full of loud speeches and baby spotlights. In the first act the author, when a smug clergyman has recourse to the Bible in announcing his stand against prostitution, hotly retorts, "Whenever a man has a particularly weak argument, he tries to bolster it up with quotations from the Scriptures." And thenceforth, for the balance of the evening, the author proceeds to do that very thing, backing up each of his feeble pronunciamentos with a Sunday-school motto and winding up his shindig with the calliope tooting "Let him who is without sin," to the full of its steam.

Imagine the Magdalene in the place of the character of Manson in "The Servant in the House"; imagine then "The Servant in the House" written by a peculiarly bad imitator of Mr. George M. Cohan; and imagine, then, the whole thing before going into rehearsal sweetened up by Marjorie Benton Cooke, and you have a clear notion of the evening's aspect. Miss Julia Arthur returns in this piece to the plateau after an absence of some fourteen years. The lady, despite her long rest, still reveals herself to be of the school of acting which believes that the dramatic content of a speech may be made the more impressive by spilling into it quarts of punctuation. Mr. Emmett Corrigan, in the leading male role, as Guillaume L'Hiver once put it, displays all the attributes of a poker save its occasional warmth. The balance of the histrionic congregation lends the two central figures appropriately bad support.

Let us pursue the pertinent subject of contemporaneous native mummer art a trifle further. Where, for in-

stance, more bizarre spectacles than in the persons of the young male actors of home manufacture currently cavorting behind the metropolitan incandescent troughs? The young native ladies, as a general thing, are a measurably lovelier and more proficient set—though still quite as conspicuously lacking in the matter of good taste in dress as are their young male associates. The average young American actor dresses him-up after the recipé of the affluent American negro. And the young ladies, four out of five of the sweet dears, bead and garter themselves like the cocottes of the Théâtre Marigny.

And what do they know of the histrionic art? From a studious contemplation of the young fellows' antics on the stage of the hour, I gather that if one were suddenly to take away from them their cigarette cases and the 'kerchiefs from the pockets of their dinner jackets, they would be unable to act at all. A cigarette case and a 'kerchief are first aids to the young American actor. Such a pickle-herring plays his part after this fashion: "I beg your pardon —all of you! (*Takes out 'kerchief and mops brow.*) That woman (*takes out cigarette case*) is Olympe Taverny! (*Opens case and extracts cigarette.*) Forgive me, father, for having dishonored the name you bear (*closes case and knocks bottom of cigarette seven or eight times upon it*), for having allowed that woman to impose on me (*throws cigarette violently into the fireplace*), for having polluted this pure house (*opens case and takes out another cigarette*) by her presence!" (*Lights cigarette, puffs, takes out 'kerchief again and wipes off brow, face, nose, ears and neck.*)

The young ladies, on the other hand, at least many of them—though as I have observed they compose in the aggregate a vastly more able junta than their longer-haired colleagues—would be unable to continue with their performing were some scamp to take them out of a rainy night and permit them to catch the rheumatism in their little right legs. A young American actress' right leg is used less for standing purposes than for purposes of curling up, when seated, under the nether physiology in order to denote a coy and irresponsible girlishness. Many of these little dears are also of the opinion that the best manner in which to point the emphatic portions of a speech is to rise at such times upon the toes. The recital of dramatic dialogue by these young persons accordingly takes on the appearance of a Swoboda lesson.

Compared with the posturings and legerdemain indulged in by the young male mimes, however, these feminine faults seem trivial enough—and few and far between. For every young actor lady who has, for example, sought to register affection by fixing the juvenile's tie, think of the young American troubadours one has envisaged whose notion of the beau, the swell, has chiefly consisted in not pulling up the trousers when sitting down. For every mademoiselle who has, for example, registered annoyance by stamping her foot, turning her back and smelling the roses, recall the native young buffoons whose idea of drawing-room *savoir faire* is keeping the hands out of the pockets. And for every young sweetmeat whose words ending in "s" sound like so many peanut stands and for every one who is given to expressing emotion mainly by a sudden contraction and distension of her little Mary, consider the young American Jack Puddings whose notion of delineating the role of a fine gentleman is buying a dress shirt like Sir George Alexander's. There is a young English actor, Tearle, in the Playhouse company, whom these local uncomfortables might watch to their benefit. There is a young English actress (a not particularly good one) in the play "Quinneys'," from whom our native young women might glean lessons in the art of being attractive without resorting painstakingly to the cutes.

Although, true, no longer a squab, Mr. Arnold Daly represents the best and highest type of American actor. This fellow has proved once again, in a play by the Messrs. Eden Phillpotts

and Basil McDonald Hastings named "The Angel in the House," that he is by all odds the most proficient minstrel upon the native platform. Daly in action is ever a thing of joy. He conveys a sense of discernment, acute humor, intelligence, shrewdly managed finish. There is, to him, something of the air of artist, of man of letters. He is, upon the stage, less an actor than a friend of the dramatist reading to friends the dramatist's lines. He offers no jockeyship of low bellows, gargles, fist-makings or Wetzel surtouts in lieu of acting. He gives one the impression of having personally read the script of the play in which he is appearing instead of —as is the more general case—having had it read to him by the stage director. It is unfortunate that this dexterous and able fellow should have selected for his most recent engagement with the theater so elephantine and heavy-footed a thrust at satire as the specimen mentioned. Essaying to apply the caustic to such whims as eugenics, the New Art, et cetera, the piece was as windy as Chicago, without Chicago's possibly more substantial qualities, and as belated as to-morrow's *Evening Telegram.*

The most recent morsel of the somewhat cryptic movement known as "under the auspices of the *Medical Review of Reviews,*" which annually entertains the hoddy-doddies with some snappy obstetrical drama, was dished out at the Maxine Elliott Theater and took the form of a play called "The Unborn," by Miss Beulah Poynter, an ingénue who these many, many years has magnetized the yokels of the hinterland with performances of thumb-sucking roles. The materials of the piece followed closely the afternoon *conversaziones* of the ladies on summer hotel piazzas.

The theme of the Poynter opuscule was abortion, the abortion being brought concretely to the attention of the audience in Act II in the shape of a scene designated on the program as "a room in the mansion of the Hartmans." Mr. Wm. A. Brady himself, in his most inspired moments, never thought of a scene like this, the tapestries in which alone were more expert comediennes than Marie Löhr. So far as the rest of the masque went, it revealed itself to be little more than a vaudeville version of Brieux's "Maternity" with a red-fire Norwegian finish in which an epileptic youth, having already killed the audience, drew out a gun and killed both his fiancée and himself and in which the boy's mother thereupon tore her hair, said "Oh, my God," and went crazy. Just what "under the auspices of the *Medical Review of Reviews*" hopes to accomplish with such crude drolleries is somewhat difficult of decipherment. There must be a Pullman porter somewhere in the woodpile!

The Poynter play was interpreted by a cast of six persons, including one actor.

There is an excellent scene in the play which the Hattons, M. and Mme., have composed in conjunction with Mr. Leo Ditrichstein as a touring body for the latter's person. It occurs in the last act; it has about it the aroma of Vienna; it is genuinely saucy. An amorous and indiscriminate operatic singer, now grown gray and creaky, his latest flame fled into the embrace of a younger fellow, calls for his man to fetch him the love letters of another day. From a card-index cabinet, the servant brings them and the old fellow, settling himself down into the depths of the davenport, prepares to stimulate his confidence anew by recourse to them. Lightly, one after the other, the still vain old dog fingers them, casts a wistful eye upon them, smiles sagacious smiles at them and lays them then aside. "Mimi," he reflects, looking up from one of the faded billets, "poor little Mimi—how she must have loved me! Can you (turning to his man) remember which one she was?" And —"Here is one that can't spell. She is also stupid. She must have been very beautiful!" And so on. There is another good scene in the first act wherein

the gay old boy tests the voice of an ambitious flapper and coincidentally tests her inclination toward a luncheon date. There is still another good scene in the same act wherein the smooth spitzbub' placates a former mistress who has become fat. And there is still another at the final curtain (suggesting a similar episode in the original version of the musical comedy "Sari") wherein the irrepressible gent, his heart just broken by the one great true love of his life (as he has fervently assured the lady) is busy planning a rendezvous in a New Rochelle roadhouse with a divorcée who has lately made eyes at him. These bits lighten up what is otherwise a mechanically conceived and even more mechanically written tale of life behind the scenes of the opera. Mr. Ditrichstein brings to the role of the Scottish chieftain his telling personality.

When, last spring, Mr. Charles Frohman went to his untimely end aboard the ill-fated vessel *Lusitania,* it was announced by his business associates that they would continue his enterprises in his name and to his memory. Pursuant to this promulgated policy, these gentlemen have now bought and presented, under the Charles Frohman name, a play by Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell called "The Chief" and poised to serve as a medium for the talents of Mr. John Drew. And in the purchase and presentation of this play they have done the dead a deep injustice. For they have, in its exhibition, perpetuated not the best memory of Charles Frohman nor the spirit of the finest ambitions and fulfilments theatrical of the man, but the worst and most lamentable. This play of Vachell's, in short, has but one apparent reason for its divulgation by the post-Frohman organization to an American audience, and this reason is that it was composed by an Englishman.

Rarely does so shoddy a job dramatic as "The Chief" see itself upon the incandescent promontory. In the first place, the thing is stupid to an almost unimaginable length. There is not a trace of novelty, of wit nor even of slapstick humor, of viewpoint, of writing grace, of life in the serenade from beginning to end. It is patently a done-to-order play, and, as such, one of the worst and most mean. The dialogue is as sprightly as an octogenarian with kidney trouble. The so-called plot, dealing with the venerable triangle, approximately as salty as ginger-beer. Mr. Drew, excellent comique ever, labors valiantly with the dingus given him, but of course in vain. In a word, I believe I tell the entire truth when I say that never in my twelve years of critical labor have I seen upon the native platform a more admirable specimen of British slop-soup. The memory we have and the memory we desire to retain of Charles Frohman, producer, is one too respectful, too honorable, to be violated by the spectacle of such snobbish drivel presented in his name.

The engaging Judge Priest fictions of the equally engaging Mr. Irvin Cobb have been showized for the Broadway stage by Mr. Bayard Veiller under the caption, "Back Home," and, as was critically not unanticipated, have lost most of their flavor in the process of transplanting. The task was a difficult one and its essenceless result is understandable. Now and again, a stick or two of Cobb characterization and Cobb humor makes itself evident in the enveloping stage liqueurs, but the play in the mass amounts to little more than conventional and regularly obvious comedy melodrama. Many of the intrinsic virtues of the printed manuscripts are completely lost in the stage garb which, on the whole, takes on an air of over-sweetness and set fireworks. There is altogether too much "big-heartedness" to the play, too much pulling out of the nature's-nobleman stop. These qualities were more deftly concealed in the printed tales. The maneuvering of the character of Jeff, the negro with a passion for gauds, has been accomplished by Mr. Veiller with

considerable skill and the episode of the fellow's liaison with a pair of fancy-topped boots possesses a genuine theatric humor. But, in the aggregate, the play lacks bubbles.

Mr. Butler Davenport's latest ambition to be a playwright is entitled "Depths of Purity" and shows the unmistakable influence upon its author of Turgenev, Artzibashef, and "Only A Boy." Mr. Davenport would seem to aspire to be sponsor on this side of the water of a theater of the species familiar to certain of the left bank alleys of Paris. To the accomplishment of this aspiration the gentleman brings, if nothing more, at least a proficiently smutty mind and the hay-loft attitude toward questions of sex. If I have suggested that Mr. Davenport has been influenced by certain of the Russians, I desire at once to clear away any correlated mistaken impression by stating that Mr. Davenport has apparently been influenced less by the Russians themselves than by the book reviews of the Russians. As a consequence of which, he has absorbed oodles of rape at the expense of literature.

A play by Mr. Davenport has all the literary merit and punch of a smoking-car story, without such a story's humor. The characters remind one of so many mischievous drummers from Winnebago, Indianapolis and Zanesville. Their conversation is as uniformly lubricious as that of the seminary dormitory. But, say what you will against this Mr. Davenport, he has yet proved one thing. He has proved that one may be naughty and still uninteresting. I had never before believed the thing possible!

Miss Grace George's second bill for her Playhouse repertory company was Henry Arthur Jones' comedy, "The Liars." Miss George's performance of the mendacious Lady Jessica was adroitly managed and Mr. Tearle's manipulation of the sentimental Falkner excellent. The balance of the company seemed to experience considerable trouble in avoiding tables, chairs and *chaises-longues*.

At the Garden Theater, Herr Emanuel Reicher is once again seeking to tickle Professor Richard Burton, of the Drama League of America, and other persons who never go to the theater, with a presentation of Björnson's "When the Young Vine Blooms." Herr Reicher advertises himself as an uplifter of the drama, which means, of course, only that he plays his pieces on a dimly lighted stage. The pantaloons of Reicher's supporting aggregation are an eager, vociferous and incompetent lot. The entire enterprise, in all faith, has about it a spoofish mien. Can it be that the actors are German spies? Certainly they are not actors. And, *entre nous,* I have noticed that the floor of the Garden Theater is of a peculiarly and suspiciously hard substance, like cement!

At the New Amsterdam, a music show, by name "Around the Map." The chief features of the evening are a display of particularly palmy scenic pictures by Josef Urban and a display of particularly humorless lines by the hitherto facile C. M. S. McLellan. The music is not by Victor Herbert. The exhibition is, however, agreeably free from the cheap vulgarity that is so frequently confounded on Broadway with comedy. The chorus is considerably below the Louis Sherwin standard.

PARTLY ABOUT BOOKS

By H. L. Mencken

§ 1

THE DISMAL ART.—The massive example of George Henry Lewes (Mr. George Eliot) to the contrary notwithstanding, the average Anglo-Saxon critic, whether of the drama or of books, continues to dispatch his business with the heavy solemnity of a college professor, a newspaper editorial writer or an embalmer. Consider, for example, William Archer. What could be more depressing than his illuminating discussions of the Ibsen plays? He penetrates to the truth almost infallibly, but he does it as if he were cutting off a leg. Even George Bernard Shaw's essays on the theatre are seldom gay; the best that can be said of them is that they make use of a sour and cruel sort of humor as a moral weapon. In aim and essence they are as serious as the harangues of a Billy Sunday; Shaw is not only convinced that the stage-plays he discusses are frightfully important things, but also that anyone who disputes it (or even doubts it *in petto*) is a moral leper. Again, think of William Winter, with his childlike veneration for such empty mummers as Richard Mansfield and Henry Irving; and the late Clement Scott, with his Puritan determination to make of art a purely moral matter. . . . A salient exception is A. B. Walkley. The fact that this most un-British of all critics serves the super-British London *Times* is but one more proof that the universe is managed by a troupe of very talented comedians. . . . But isn't it significant that Walkley is quite unable to express his idea in the English language, that he is forever dropping into French, German, Latin and Greek, so that the average Englishman, who is belligerently unilingual, can't understand the half of him? The same peculiarity is to be noted in the only American dramatic critic comparable to him in nimbleness of wit, scope of professional knowledge and freedom from superstition. . . . Can it be that English lacks a critical vocabulary, that English critics have to step cautiously and heavily because they must pick out stepping-stones? Surely the Frenchman is at vastly greater ease in such adventuring, if only because his way is well-worn, and its very ruts are roomy and casual and comfortable.

§ 2

Gilding Faded Lilies.—Some time ago, discoursing in this place upon music, I ventured the view that 'twould be a pretty thing for Richard Strauss to re-orchestrate the finale of Schumann's D minor symphony. Let me now move with the sacrilege into beautiful letters. Why not a new version of "Vanity Fair" by Arnold Bennett? Or a revision of Congreve and Wycherley by Shaw? (How I should like to see "The Old Bachelor" revised and dephlogisticated by the Irish Puritan!) Or an improved edition of Jane Austen by George Moore? Or of George Eliot by Elinor Glyn? Or a complete recasting of Byron's poetry by Alfred Noyes . . . The plan, indeed, has endless possibilities. There is scarcely a classic that is perfect as it stands; in everyone of them, save perhaps "Barry Lyndon," "Alice in Wonderland" and the prologue to the Canterbury Tales,

one can readily imagine improvements. How greatly Stevenson, if he had had the courage, might have bettered most of the Waverley Novels! What W. S. Gilbert might have done for "Paradise Lost"! Or Eugene Field for "The Ring and the Book"!

§ 3

Conrad Again.—The best study of Joseph Conrad that has yet appeared is to be found in a little book by Wilson Follet, lately privately printed by Doubleday, Page & Company. Why privately? God knows. Perhaps because this same firm publishes Richard Curle's highly unsatisfactory tome on Conrad—ten per cent. sound criticism and the rest wind and moonshine. Ask for a copy of the Follet book at once; it is for free distribution so long as the supply lasts. It is full of sharp observation and intelligent discussion. I recall a haunting saying: "Under all his stories there ebbs and flows a kind of tempered melancholy, a sense of seeking and not finding . . . " Nothing could better describe the effect of such tales as "Almayer's Folly," "Nostromo" and "Lord Jim." Even "Youth," though it interprets and celebrates the indomitable, yet has defeat and tragedy in it; one sees the break-up of middle age beyond the Homeric endeavors of one-and-twenty. . . . Mr. Follet finds the cause of Conrad's preference for *adagio* in the circumstances of his own life—his double exile, first from Poland and then from the sea. But this is surely stretching the facts until they squeak. Neither exile, in truth, was enforced, nor is either irrevocable. Conrad has been back to Poland, and he is free to 'round the Horn again whenever the spirit moves him. Far better to look for the springs of his melancholy in that deepest-lying race philosophy which seems to engulf all reflective men soon or late. I mean resignationism.

All philosophies and all religions come to resignationism at the last. Once it takes shape as the concept of Nirvana, the desire for nothingness, the will to not-will. Again, it is fatalism in this form or that—Mohammedanism, Agnosticism, . . . Presbyterianism! Yet again, it is the "Out, out, brief candle!" of Shakespeare, the "Vanitas vanitatum; omnia vanitas!" of the Preacher. Or, to make an end, it is millenniumism, or the theory that the world is going to blow up to-morrow, or the day after, or two weeks hence, and that all sweating and striving are thus useless. Search where you will, near or far, in ancient or in modern times, and you will never find a race or an age that gave more than a passing bow to optimism. Even Christianity, starting out as "glad tidings," has had to take on protective coloration to survive, and to-day its chief professors moan and blubber like Iokanaan in Herod's rain-barrel. The sanctified are few and far between. The vast majority of us must suffer in hell, just as we suffer on earth. The divine grace, so omnipotent to save, is withheld from us. Why? There, alas, is your insoluble mystery, your riddle of the universe. . . .

This conviction that human life is a seeking without a finding, that its purpose is impenetrable, that joy and sorrow are alike meaningless, you will see written largely in the work of all great artists. It is obviously the final message, if any message is to be sought there at all, of the nine symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven. It is the idea that broods over Wagner's Ring, as the divine wrath broods over the Old Testament. In Shakespeare, as Shaw has demonstrated, it amounts to a veritable obsession. What else is there in Turgenieff, Dostoievski, Andrieff? Or in the Zola of "L'Assommoir," "Germinal," "La Débâcle," the whole Rougon-Masquart series? (The Zola of "Les Quatres Evangiles," and particularly of "Fécondité," turned uplifter and optimist, and became ludicrous.) Or in Hauptmann, or Hardy, or Sudermann (I mean, of course, Sudermann the novelist; Sudermann the dramatist is a mere mechanician). . . The younger men of today, in all countries,

seem to cherish this philosophy of impotence and surrender. Consider the last words of "Riders to the Sea." Or Gorky's "Nachtasyl." Or Frank Norris' "McTeague." Or Dreiser's "Jennie Gerhardt." Or George Moore's "Sister Theresa." Or Conrad's "An Outcast of the Islands."

Conrad, more than any other of the men I have mentioned, grounds his whole work upon a sense of this "immense indifference of things." The exact point of the story of Kurtz, in "Heart of Darkness," is that it is pointless, that Kurtz's death is as meaningless as his life, that the moral of such a sordid tragedy is a wholesale negation of all morals. And this, no less, is the point of the story of "Falk," and of that of Almayer, and of that of Jim. Mr. Follet (he must be an American!) finds himself, in the end, unable to accept so profound a pessimism unadulterated, and so he injects a gratuitous and mythical optimism into it, and hymns Conrad "as a comrade, one of a company gathered under the ensign of hope for common war on despair." With the highest regard, Pish! Conrad makes war upon nothing; he is pre-eminently *not* a moralist. He swings, indeed, as far from moralizing as is possible, for he does not even criticise God. His undoubted comradeship, his plain kindliness toward the souls he vivisects, is not the child of hope but of pity. Like Mark Twain he might well say: "The more I see of men, the more I laugh at them—and the more I pity them." He is *simpatico* precisely because of his infinite commiseration. . . . I have said that he does not criticise God; one may imagine him even pitying God. . . .

As for Conrad the literary artist (opposing him here to Conrad the humanist), one cause of the startling vividness that he gets into his narrative is to be found in the dimness that he so deliberately leaves there. A paradox, of course, but I do not devise it for its own sake, believe me. What I mean to say is that Conrad always shows us a picture that is full of the little obscurities, the uncertainties of outline, the mysterious shadings-off, that we see in the real world around us. He does not pretend to the traditional omniscience of the novelist. He is not forever translating the unknowable in motive and act into ready formulae; instead, he says frankly that he does not know, or, at best, "I believe," or "perhaps," or "Marlow thinks it possible." A trick? To be sure. But also much more than a trick, for its constant repetition not only constitutes a manner but also indicates a state of mind. Conrad knows his characters too well to explain them too glibly. They are too real to him (and to us) to be made quite understandable. They keep to the end all of that fine mysteriousness which forever hangs about those who are nearest and dearest to us. . . . A man may profess to understand the President of the United States, but he seldom alleges, even to himself, that he understands his wife.

§ 4

Cinderella the Nth—There is nothing new in the story that Willa Sibert Cather tells in "THE SONG OF THE LARK" (*Houghton Mifflin*); it is, in fact, merely one more version, with few changes, of the ancient fable of Cinderella, probably the oldest of the world's love stories, and surely the most steadily popular. Thea Kronborg begins as a Methodist preacher's daughter in a little town in Colorado, and ends as Sieglinde at the Metropolitan Opera House, with a packed house "roaring" at her and bombarding her with "a greeting that was almost savage in its fierceness." As for Fairy Princes, there are no less than three of them, the first a Galahad in the sooty overalls of a freight conductor, the second a small town doctor with a disagreeable wife, and the third Mr. Fred Ottenburg, the *Bierkronprinz*.

But if the tale is thus conventional in its outlines, it is full of novelty and ingenuity in its details, and so the reading of it passes very pleasantly. Miss Cather, indeed, here steps definitely

into the small class of American novelists who are seriously to be reckoned with. Her "Alexander's Bridge" was full of promise, and her "O Pioneers" showed the beginnings of fulfilment. In "The Song of the Lark" she is already happily at ease, a competent journeyman. I have read no late novel, in fact, with a greater sense of intellectual stimulation. Especially in the first half, it is alive with sharp bits of observation, sly touches of humor, gestures of that gentle pity which is the fruit of understanding. Miss Cather not only has a desire to write; she also has something to say. Ah, that the former masked less often as the latter! Our scriveners are forever mistaking the *cacoëthes scribendi* for a theory of beauty and a rule of life. But not this one. From her book comes the notion that she has thought things out, that she is never at a loss, that her mind is plentifully stored. I commend her story to your affable attention—at least the first half of it.

§ 5

The Puritan.—One hears, in "The Song of the Lark," too little of old Kronborg, the father of Thea, a one-horse Methodist preacher in a one-horse town. To me, at all events, there is endless fascination in such a man. What American novelist will first depict and interpret the Puritan? (I do not mean the Puritan Father, for that has been attempted by Hawthorne and others, but the Puritan of today, the neighborhood uplifter, the advocate of harsh laws, the bitter critic and reformer of his brother over the fence). There is a brilliant flashlight picture in the second chapter of E. W. Howe's "The Story of a Country Town," but it is no more than a flash. Frank Norris was the man for a full-length portrait, but he was too much intrigued by the romance of commerce to give his attention to it. Perhaps Dreiser will some day undertake it. He has the capital advantage of being of un-Puritan blood, of having no race sympathy to overcome. But he lacks, alas, the bitter wit, the hand for satire. The Puritan is not to be dealt with calmly and scientifically, but savagely, joyfully, with gusto. What a job the Hilaire Belloc of "Emmanuel Burden" might have made of him! But that Hilaire Belloc, alackaday, is now no more! . . .

§ 6

The Shy, Shy Girls.—Before parting from Miss Cather, let us join in praising her for a rare sort of courage: she gives the exact date of her birth in "Who's Who in America." Do I spoof? Nay. Very few of our literary girls do it. Is Mrs. Atherton 27 or 72? You will never find out from that gaudy red volume, though the fact that she is a *g. g. niece* of Benjamin Franklin is duly set forth.

Another fair fictioner tells us that her father was the son of a sister of a president of the United States, but neglects to tell us how long she has been a student in the school of human experience. Yet another confesses that she has been "engaged in literary work since 1895," but doesn't say how old she was when she began. Yet another is careful to give the quite undistinguished occupation of her deceased husband, but goes no further with her confidences. Glancing through these humorless, telegraphic autobiographies, one happens upon various naif and chatty things. One lady says that she has been to Europe five times; another that she writes about "women's capacity and potentiality;" another that she has "made a specialty of geography;" another that she has four children; another that she is a Colonial Dame; several boast bravely that they are unmarried; more than one admits having contributed to THE SMART SET, and even to *The Atlantic Monthly*. But none of these talkative girls tells us her age! . . . . Lest I be accused of foul injustice, or worthy ladies be wrongfully suspected, let me add that most of the gentle authors whose work is comparable to Miss Cather's are quite

as honest as she is. For example, Miss Mary Johnston, Miss Ellen Glasgow, Mrs. Wharton, Mrs. Watts . . . four names are enough. In this field, indeed, reticence seems to be in indirect ratio to accomplishment.

§ 7

In Schwerer Zeit.—John Palmer begins his humorless, elephantine "epitaph" of George Bernard Shaw with the statement that "at midnight on August 4th, 1914, all that literature hitherto described as modern passed quietly away in its sleep." Almost a platitude!—at all events, in England. More than any other of the allied countries, England shows signs of surgical shock, of concussion of the heart and brain, of a spiritual collapse, and more than any other class of Englishmen, not even excepting the bishops and the politicians, the authors of the tight little isle are its victims. H. G. Wells, for example, has frankly gone to pot; the stuff he has done during the past year calls for charity rather than for criticism. And such fellows as Arnold Bennett, G. K. Chesterton and Rudyard Kipling have suffered even worse. Kipling, indeed, has apparently passed into a state of mind which can only be described as pathological. The literary artist of yesteryear has departed, one fears forever; what remains is only a frightened householder in a flapping night-shirt, bawling for the police down a dark alley. . . . And what of Conrad? Has he been damaged as badly as the others? Despite the curious banality of his account of his Polish experiences, I presume to doubt it. While the others rant and blubber, he has next to nothing to say. . . . One detects in that silence something characteristically and magnificently ironical: the immigrant's but half concealed sneer at the native. For Conrad, after all, is not an Englishman, but a Pole. He comes of a race that is proud and undemocratic, a race that Nietzsche, with his fine sense of the heroic, regarded with almost superstitious veneration, a race that knows how to endure without complaint. One wonders just what, in his inmost heart, he thinks of the bellowing of Kipling, the feeble paralogy of Chesterton, the lower middle-class fustian of Wells and Bennett. What, indeed, must he think of (in Palmer's phrase) "insolence as a fine art"? Of the cad as artist?

§ 8

A Forgotten Holy Day.—Who knows that one single day of the year 1885, to-wit, March 14th, saw the birth of two immortal works, "The Mikado" and "Huckleberry Finn"? Both light-hearted, both devoid of moral content—but both, I opine, destined to live. From end to end of the nineteenth century the English drama received no more novel, no more charming, and, for that matter, no more important accession than "The Mikado." It is worth to-day all the other stage plays and operettas written in England between the year 1800 and the first night of Pinero's "The Magistrate"—I mean all of them taken together—if only its own delightful predecessor, "Pinafore," be counted out. And it is a sounder, a more honest and a vastly more interesting piece of work than any single English play that has been written since. Moreover, its score contains some of the best music of the best British composer since Harry Purcell. For example, the chorus of schoolgirls, just before the "Three Little Maids" song. For example, "Tit Willow." For example, the finale of the second act. The man who wrote this music, true enough, was an Irishman, but the man who inspired it was an Englishman. England should be proud of Gilbert. He was the greatest librettist since King David. . . .

As for "Huckleberry Finn," its place among the truly great books of the world will not be understood for some time to come. But there is where it belongs, and there is where it will be found soon or late. It is easily the peer of "Don Quixote" and "Tristram Shandy"; nay, of "Tom Jones." Curiously enough, its author had but a

low opinion of it and wrote it rather grudgingly. You will find the whole story in Albert Bigelow Paine's "Mark Twain"—one of the most satisfying biographies, by the way, in many years. Mark labored over "Huck," off and on, for six or seven years; he was forever putting the manuscript aside and turning to more engaging tasks. In the end he probably fell into the stupendous error of ranking it below "Tom Sawyer"—an error into which he was helped by various college professor critics. It is as if Tolstoi's "What Is Art?" were put above "Anna Karenina." Or Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" before "The Last Supper." Almost as if Beethoven's Eroica Symphony were called greater than the Fifth, or the Pastoral set ahead of the Eighth. . . . Mark, in truth, was an incurable Philistine. "Lohengrin" always struck him as it might strike an average Congressman, theatre musician or Pullman porter—that is, as sheer noise and damnable to hear. This Philistinism colored his attitude toward his own works. The things he took most delight in were his clumsiest and most banal buffooneries and his heaviest attempts at sweet sentiment. To the day of his death it probably never occurred to him that "Huckleberry Finn" had made his fame secure.

§ 9

A Sound Workman.—"THE STAR ROVER," by Jack London (*Macmillan*), proves anew what I have often maintained in this place, to wit, that London is probably the most competent literary workman, the soundest and cleverest technician, now at work among us. His actual stories of late years have tended toward a feeble marvelousness and silliness (it is so of this one), but the manner in which they are written is always excellent and sometimes superb. Not only does he know how to devise and manage a fable; he also has a delicate taste in words, and seldom makes a tactical mistake in their use. Out of all this comes the charm, the plausibility, the address of the man, which is to say, his success. No current novelist writing in English, save perhaps H. G. Wells, comes closer to a mastery of the trade. . . . Style, of course, is the man. London writes pleasingly, not only because he is skilful, but also, and perhaps chiefly, because he must be a man of hearty and agreeable personality. One gets many amusing glimpses of him in "THE LOG OF THE SNARK," by his wife, Charmian Kittredge London (*Macmillan*), a chronicle of their journey to the South Seas in a 57-foot ketch.

§ 10

Department Store Literature.—The popular novels, so far as I can make out, do not get better as year follows year, but cheaper, emptier, sillier. For example, consider "A MAN'S HEARTH," by Eleanor M. Ingram (*Lippincott*). Here we are made privy to the regeneration of Tony Adriance, son and heir to a notorious multi-millionaire. In order to escape from the clutches of Mrs. Lucille Masterson, who plans to divorce her husband and marry him, Tony commits the crime hymeneal with a beautiful nursemaid named Miss Elsie Murray and goes to work as a chauffeur for his own father! In the end, of course, he becomes manager of the great Adriance paper-mill, working up to that post by his own unaided efforts. . . . A stimulating dish of phosphates for the brain-fagged! A soothing dose for lazy fat women while their husbands sweat downtown! . . .

"BELTANE THE SMITH," the latest confection from the *fabrik* of Jeffery Farnol (*Little-Brown*), is a tale of amour in the Robin Hood manner, and starts off with such stylistic twitterings and grimaces as these: "A mighty man was Beltane the Smith, despite his youth already great of stature and comely of feature. Much knew he of woodcraft, of the growth of herb and tree and flower, of beast and bird, and how to tell each by its cry or song or flight; . . . versed was he, likewise, in the ancient wisdoms and philosophies, both Latin and Greek, having

learned all these things from him whom men called Ambrose the Hermit." Under the cover of this quasi-archaic guff, Farnol slips over the astounding news that Beltane (of course, after washing up) beguiles his leisure by painting illuminations on vellum! Imagine it: the weary blacksmith "teasing up" a Book of Hours! (What next? Jess Willard studying Chopin? Hindenburg knitting socks for the Belgians?) . . . But this marvel, fortunately enough, is not referred to often. Beltane, after a while, has no time for the gentle monastic art; he is really, it turns out, a duke, and he devotes himself to the ducal sports of fighting and love-making. Incidentally, Mr. Farnol's delicate Old English breaks down toward the end. On page 569, for example, one encounters this: "And now Beltane's breath grew short and thick, his strong hand trembled on the bridle, and he grew alternate hot and cold." Almost American! Richard Harding Davis might have written it. Or even Mr. Chambers. But immediately afterward Mr. Farnol apologizes, as it were, with this: "So they rode into the echoing courtyard, whither *hasted* old Godric to welcome them. . . . Who so *mumchance* as Beltane, I say . . ." Or, for that matter, who so goustrous? Or so noddypolled? Or so besniggled?

The canned review of "HEART'S CONTENT," by Ralph Henry Barbour (*Lippincott*), announces "nothing sordid, nothing that will offend the most delicate taste, and yet much that will fascinate the most refined." But on page 203, there is a distinct and brazen mention of the heroine's ankles, and not only of her ankles, but even of her actual feet; and on page 204 she slides shamelessly into the arms of a man, and is roundly bussed in full view of the seven upstairs windows of a neighbor's house. Is this stuff for hiding under boarding-school pillows? . . . On page 8 of "THE WOOING OF ROSAMUND FAYRE," by Berta Ruck (*Dodd-Mead*) Miss Rosamond is writing love letters to Capt. Teddy Urquhart for and in the name of his cousin and fiancée, Miss Eleanor Urquhart, whom she serves as social secretary. I leave you to guess which of the two girls Teddy has in his arms on page 374. . . .

Such is the commercial novel, the best-seller. I have not described the worst, but almost the best.

§ 11

Blind Barabbases.—I am no believer, Got wot, in neglected geniuses; all the unpublished masterpieces that have come to me for reading have been atrociously bad. Nevertheless, the publishers of this fair republic often give color to the contrary superstition by a certain slowness of wit. It took two or three years for O. Henry to be discovered; the fact that he was destined to enchant the tired business man should have been obvious to the first publisher's reader who filched his postage stamps. Montague Glass had been bombarding the magazines for six or eight years before he was given his chance. Both men, true enough, were bound to be found out—but both had to wait. . . . How long will it take the most enterprising of American publishers (whoever he may be) to print the first book of John McClure, of Oklahoma? Here is a chance, not only to enlist a young poet who will probably be the rage in four or five years, but also to launch a literature. McClure is the first exponent of beautiful letters in Oklahoma, the Venerable Bede of that new empire, the *stammvater* of the Oklahoman hierarchy of bards. More, he is a maker and singer of very respectable parts, even when judged by the standards of our eastern Sodoms and Ninevehs. He has an extraordinarily delicate ear; his rhythms are full of Elizabethan surprises and syncopations; he uses words lovingly, reverently, beautifully. The influence of Ezra Pound is apparent in his work, but his is an altogether more graceful and delicate talent than Pound's. . . . Who will put him between covers?

In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Renée

If you are interested in advance information, not only about the mode, but about things novel, dainty and useful, to be found in New York's best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We will be glad to tell you where these articles can be found, or to purchase them for you. Address your inquiry to "In the Shops of the Smart Set," 331 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

IT was as early as last February that a columnist, who was impressed by the recent campaigns and wanted to be in time for this season, began saying: "Do Your Christmas Shopping Early." Yet in spite of such a start and the support that came later, there was just as little response this year as ever, and the Christmas shops were even more than usually crowded with people buying last-minute presents.

No doubt, apart from the mutable nature of the gift list itself, one of the chief causes of this late shopping is that the good stores have come to expect it, and make provisions accordingly to have present-buying on December the twenty-third or fourth attended with the least possible degree of inconvenience. But the main reason—and the best excuse—for all this procrastination is that just before the holidays so many new and desirable things make their appearance that those who have bought all their presents some time in advance feel obliged either to exchange them or to buy more from the fresh supply.

Among these late and attractive arrivals was the skating blouse shown on this page. It is of the new "grass" or Georgette satin, in a beautiful shade of rose with contrasting taupe velvet at the belt, and collar and buttons of moleskin. To make it fancy enough for afternoon or evening indoor skating without sacrificing anything of its necessarily practical style, half the sleeves are of transparent Georgette crêpe, and there is a deep peplum of knife-plaited self material. The price of this blouse was twenty-five dollars, and for the same amount there were others in different colors, some of which were trimmed with seal in place of the moleskin. Skating is so popular lately that a blouse of this sort has become almost a necessary feature of a young girl's wardrobe, and as the lines of this particular one are loose enough to ensure its not being a bad fit, it would make a splendid gift for an intimate woman friend, especially if sent with the little cap in a shade to match, shown in the same illustration, which costs $6.50 in one of the larg-

est millinery shops on Fifth Avenue.

ANOTHER NEW BLOUSE

Much the same can be said of the Russian blouse that is shown on page 313, except that, as this is a little more closely fitting, it would be better to have a fairly good idea beforehand of the size required by the girl who is to wear

it. This model is one of the very latest ideas in blouse styles, and it followed in the train of the new Russian costumes, just as they themselves resulted from the military suits which came in with the war. The satin which forms the major part of this is in an extremely delicate shade of pink, matched by the silk velvet composing the collar, yoke, cuffs and belt. As the real beauty of the blouse lies in its perfect cut and style, the only attempt made at trimming is a fine embroidery of silver on the silk velvet, and a finish of black skunk at the neck and wrists. The price is thirty dollars.

ETCHED BRONZE NOVELTIES

Getting away from gifts for intimate friends, and at the same time from women's clothes, in an establishment that is noted for its statuary and bronze work, is the little tiger shown on page 314. This is an excellent model, in bronze finished in gold, about five inches long. It is intended for an ornament or a paperweight, and the price is only three dollars.

In the same place was the electric lamp shown also on this page. It would form about the same style of gift as the tiger, though a rather more expensive one, and it is of etched bronze finished in gold. The globe is lined with amber glass, and there are others in the same style finished in green with green glass. As the adjustment can be fixed at any angle, this could serve equally well as a reading light, a boudoir lamp or a desk light, and the price of $31 is not at all dear for such a good specimen of bronze work.

FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION

An important place among Christmas and New Year social entertainments is occupied by the children's parties and for these occasions is designed the dainty little frock shown on this page. The style is becomingly simple for a little child, though the small puff sleeves and round neck give a hint of period styles and lend it character, but the elaboration necessary for party wear is supplied by the fineness of the materials. It is of silk Georgette crêpe, in very pale pink with scalloped pink silk around the neck, hem, and sleeves. The waist is rather high, and finished with a piping of the silk, and a little knot of pink and black velvet. For wear on very special occasions, this little dress is not too expensive at thirty dollars.

GIFTS TO A HOSTESS

At a shop farther down the Avenue was found the door stop on page 314. It is of a Dutch design, somewhat in the shape of an old andiron. The base is of wood, covered with leather, and painted in an odd floral design of dull colors. The handle is of metal, painted in black and gold, and is about eighteen inches long, making the whole thing

nearly three-quarters of a yard high. This would form a really novel present, and the price of it is only six dollars.

The twine lady standing in front of this is from the same shop, and being both useful and ornamental would be acceptable to almost anybody. The wood of this is painted in very bright colors, and black and white, and the ball of twine is red. It costs only $2.50, and apart from use at Christmas time, it would form a good little "bread and butter present"—as they call them in England—to a hostess.

The same hostess would no doubt welcome the nut bowl, shown in the same illustration. Mahogany forms the bowl itself, and the hammer and anvil are of copper. The base is green baize. Complete with a little copper squirrel perched on the side, this costs $4.50, or it can be obtained without the squirrel for four dollars.

NEW PERFUMES

Perfume is, of course, always a refuge in time of perplexity as to what to give for Christmas, and an establishment just off the Avenue which is noted for its exquisite imported perfumes chose a very propitious time to introduce a new toilet water. The toilet water is new only in the sense of its being toilet water,—the odors are the same as those which earned the perfumes of this house their reputation. Violet, lily of the valley, and rose are the flower scents and these resemble almost exactly the perfume of the flowers themselves. The toilet water comes in a bottle about four inches square, such as shown on page 314, and it is unusually fragrant and lasting. The price, which is very moderate, considering its quality, is $1.50.

A MAN'S PRESENT

Behind this, is shown a new cigarette box—the first man's present, by the way. This was found in an exclusive furniture house, among a showing of handsome lamps, cellarets and desk sets. It is of mahogany, enamelled in old ivory, and it is made in two parts, one fitting over the other. The top is not detachable and when the box is filled with cigarettes, it is raised and lowered, letting out one cigarette at a time on a groove in the lid. This has the advantage of being unlike most patent cigarette boxes that men receive at Christmas time, in that the cigarettes are always in perfect condition, and not so battered and scarred in the operation of obtaining them as to be unsmokable when they finally emerge. To women whom experience has taught to abstain from such presents as socks and ties, this should prove a welcome solution of the gift problem, especially as, while the workmanship and the materials are of the best, the price is only four dollars.

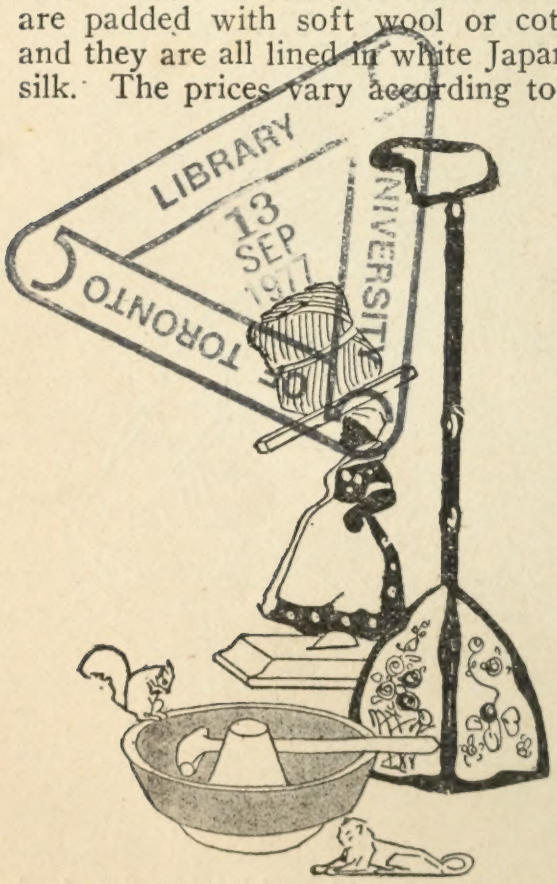
In another part of this shop was a handsome set of tables, in raised green and gold lacquer. They were in graded sizes, and were shaped exactly alike, so that when they were not in use, they could be fitted together to occupy only the space of one. The decoration on

the top of each table, which consisted of a scene raised in gold on the green lacquer, varied only according to the size. These would serve excellently at such little functions as afternoon teas and the fact that they form an attractive

and compact piece of furniture makes them preferable to the usual cumbersome little sets of tables it is generally necessary to employ for these purposes. The price of the set of five was sixty dollars.

IN A JAPANESE SHOP

The Japanese shops on Fifth Avenue always have any number of interesting things for presents. In one of these places are several new versions of the old kimono, in such materials as Habutai, silk, and crêpe de chine, with very wide girdles to match. The embroidery, which always forms the major attraction of these things, was unusually beautiful. One was in Nattier blue crêpe de chine, embroidered in pale pink silk, in a design of cherry blossoms, and another in pale green had a design of waterlilies in white, and storks in red, black, and white. Most of these are padded with soft wool or cotton, and they are all lined in white Japanese silk. The prices vary according to the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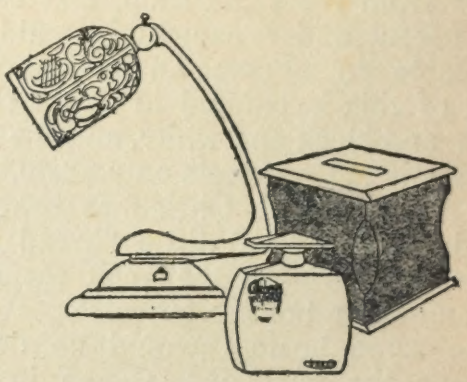
materials, ranging from ten dollars upwards.

Something new in the way of Japanese charms was seen in the same shop, in the form of little bone dragons and queer-looking dogs, carved and painted in red and black. These were hardly an inch across, and one-eighth of an inch thick, yet they were made to



open, and enclosed four tiny white bone-dice, spotted with red and black. The charm is supposed to bring good luck to the wearer, and while as a present it would form hardly more than a little addition to a Christmas or New Year card, a number of them would form excellent favors for a dinner party. The price of these, in any number of different designs, is twenty-five cents each.

FOR THE CHILDREN

Toys for the children are, of course, one of the major items in the shopping list. For the really little children, in the toy department of a Fifth Avenue store is a big fluffy ball for fifty cents, a little unbreakable dog for the same price, and an odd little man doll, made to stand hard wear, with a padded cotton body and brightly colored clothes. For a child a little older was a set of pasteboard furniture made to cut out and fold, for twenty-five cents, and a doll with a trunk full of clothes for $1.50.

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